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## Jan. 1 declared public holiday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Starting 1996 Jan. 1 will be observed as an official holiday in the kingdom, according to official sources. The sources said that the decision to observe a public holiday on Jan. 1 ended a debate on whether to observe a public holiday on Christmas day when Jordanian Christians are given Dec. 25 and Dec. 26 as official holidays. Demands for observing a public holiday on Jan. 1 were raised in the past but the government did not heed the demands. Many private sector companies have for years considered Jan. 1 a public holiday, however. Syria and Lebanon are among neighbouring countries which mark the fall of the New Year with a public holiday.

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# Jordan Times

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جوردن تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الرأي

King to present state awards

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein will attend a ceremony on Sunday at the Royal Cultural Centre to honour Jordanian intellectuals, writers and artists who won this year's state awards. The King will present the King Hussein gold and silver awards to the winners and will receive a token gift from the Ministry of Culture.

House adopts reply to King's speech

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament on Saturday endorsed a draft reply to the Speech from the Throne delivered by His Majesty King Hussein to Parliament last week at the opening of the current ordinary session. A House committee grouping eight deputies had prepared the draft, which was presented to the House at Saturday's session attended by Cabinet members and the House speaker. The reply speech will be presented to King Hussein later on by Speaker Sa'd Hayel Sour in the presence of House members.

Cabinet approves Italy debt deal

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Saturday approved a draft agreement with Italy on rescheduling \$34,40,899 of Jordan's debts to Italy. Meeting under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the Cabinet also approved a memorandum of understanding signed with the Canadian Civil Aviation Authority providing for cooperation in the field of aviation and air control. The Cabinet also endorsed a decision by the Jordanian Investments Corporation to borrow JD 10 million to buy 2.75 million shares in the Housing Bank. The Council of Ministers also set up a Jordanian delegation to take part in the four-day negotiations due to start on Sunday with the European Union (EU) on partnership accord. The delegation will be headed by Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Ammar.

Algerian jailed for attack in France

NICE, France (AFP) — A French court sentenced 24-year-old Algerian, Mohammad Bensouf, to seven years in prison for attempting to murder a man pasting up National Front posters, legal sources said Saturday. In June 1990, in Vallauris, southeastern France, Alex Tamari, who was part of a team sticking up publicity posters for the French extreme right party, was hit in the thigh by a bullet fired from a car. Several days later, police arrested three occupants of the car, all Algerians who lived in Vallauris, one of whom was a minor. The court heard they admitted firing the shot, but defence lawyers claimed they had not wished to kill the poster mounter, and that they had only wished to frighten him.

Andreotti "almost" regrets politics

ROME (AFP) — Legendary Italian politician Giulio Andreotti, on trial for alleged collusion with the mafia, admitted Saturday he "almost" regretted his nearly 50-year political career, during which he was seven times prime minister. "If I had known (in 1947) how things would have turned out, I would have probably said no thank you" (to a political career) and I would have done something different," the Christian Democrat senator said in an interview with a Catholic radio station. "This conclusion to my life is so bitter, so critical and so unfair that it makes me almost regret having pursued a political career," he said. However, he continued: "I do regret of my activity. I know that I managed to do important things, especially in foreign politics and developing dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis."

## Peres seeks 'new ideas' to achieve 'total peace'

Israeli premier sees changes in Syrian thinking after Rabin's assassination

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres called Saturday for new ideas from both Israel and Syria to help forge a "total peace" and break deadlock in their negotiations.

"Something happened in Damascus after this murder. The Syrians have understood that the differences in Israel (over the peace process) are very serious and that time is limited for advancing on the path to peace."

"Israel hopes for a total peace with Syria, which can be achieved in a not very long period of time," the prime minister told army radio ahead of his talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington on Monday.

"All the channels of negotiation must be open. We must convince the Syrian and Israeli peoples of the need to think of future generations, to create a new Middle East and a new future," he said.

The Israeli and Syrian negotiators must not stick to positions decided on in advance. They must mutually show more flexibility and propose new ideas," Mr. Peres said.

He said the assassination of his predecessor Yitzhak

Rabin on Nov. 4 by a Jewish extremist opposed to the peace process had created an opportunity for a clinical opening in the dialogue with the Golan Heights.

He also wants to speed up the pace of negotiations with Syria to finalise an accord, at least in principle, before Israel's elections next October, advisors to the prime minister said.

Mr. Peres urged Syrian President Hafez Al Assad to take steps to prove he is earnest about peace.

"(Assad) has to open all channels, to understand that each one of us has to convince the people of Syria and Israel of our seriousness to solve all the differences in a peaceful way," Mr. Peres said.

"The region is ripe for a comprehensive peace," Mr. Peres said. "Syria can make large and significant contribution and the matter can be obtained in not too long a period of time."

Mr. Peres said that during

(Continued on page 7)

## Jordan orders out Iranian for non-diplomatic action

By P.V. Vivekanand  
*Jordan Times Staff Reporter*

AMMAN — Jordan has declared an Iranian diplomat persona non grata and ordered him out of the country for "activities incompatible with his diplomatic status," official sources said Saturday.

The expulsion order against Saed Batini, a third secretary who served as deputy chief of mission at the Iranian mission, was served on Iranian Ambassador Ahmad Dastamchian who was summoned to the Foreign Ministry Saturday morning, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

"The diplomat has been

### Tehran approves Jordanian envoy

TEHRAN ON Saturday received the expulsion of a Jordanian diplomat, apparently in retaliation for Amman's decision to deport a senior Iranian diplomat.

The Iranian news agency (IRNA) said Jordanian diplomat Ahmad Faisal Al Sabbagh was declared "persona non grata for activities considered to have been inconsistent with the nature of his diplomatic activity" and was given a week to leave Tehran.

declared persona non grata and asked to leave Jordan because he undertook activities that are not compatible with his diplomatic status," said one official. A 48-hour deadline was set for his de-

parture.

No comment was im-

(Continued on page 7)

## Qatar threatens to boycott Gulf Arab meetings if Saudi GCC chief attended

DOHA (R.) — Qatar threatened on Saturday to boycott Gulf Arab and other regional meetings if a new Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) secretary-general attended.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Bin Jaber Al Thani told a news conference that GCC partners and allies in the eight-nation Damascus declaration attended.

Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani walked out of a GCC summit in Oman on Wednesday because of disagreement over how a GCC chief executive should be chosen.

The move exposed rift within the GCC alliance, which also groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

Diplomats said Qatar wanted to protest Saudi Arabia's absolute control over

the Gulf alliance.

### GCC at 'crossroads,' Qatari paper says

The GCC has come to a "crossroads" after Qatar's walk-out at the GCC summit, a Qatari newspaper said Friday, stressing Doha's determination to follow an independent policy.

"The issues relating to the members will either be resolved in frank and realistic manner, or we shall continue singing the same empty songs about unity," the semi-official Al Arab daily said.

Al Arab said that the conflict over the appointment

was simply the result of a "cumulation" of other disputes.

(Continued on page 7)

## Clashes, protests in Nablus amid festivities in Tulkarm

NABLUS (Agencies) — Israeli troops and Palestinian protesters clashed in the West Bank on Saturday just before the towns of Nablus and Tulkarm were to be handed over to the Palestinian self-rule authority, witnesses said.

Also in Nablus, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) staged a rally attended by about 3,000 supporters in which it called for a boycott of the first Palestinian elections next month.

In Gaza, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) delayed candidate registration for the elections to give Hamas a chance to participate, a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said.

The Israeli army declared Nablus a closed military zone on Friday night following clashes in which Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian man and wounded three.

The army also sealed off the West Bank town of Tulkarm on Saturday ahead of its planned transfer to the PNA Sunday.

In Tulkarm, residents festooned their shops and homes with flags, banners and posters of PLO leader Yasser Arafat in preparation for its transfer to Palestinian control.

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres reiterated Saturday his country's commitment to vacate six of seven major Palestinian towns by the end of the year.

(Continued on page 7)

## King says Arab and Israeli silent majority should speak up to expose minority opponents of peace

PARIS (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein has called on the "silent majority" in Jordan and Israel to speak out and express their views clearly in order to show the right size of the minority opposing the Middle East peace process.

In an interview with the French Point de Vue magazine published Saturday, King Hussein said the Arab and Israeli "silent majority supports the Middle East peace process more determined to continue working to achieve their common goal — peace."

"I want to say a simple thing, that the dividing line exists not between Jordan and Israel, but between the proponents of peace and opponents of peace," King Hussein said.

Jordan, the King added,

order to reduce the minority that opposes the peace process to its right size."

King Hussein said he was

convinced that the assassin

ation of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin last month made supporters of peace in the Middle East more determined to continue working to achieve their common goal — peace.

"I want to say a simple

thing, that the dividing

line exists not between

Jordan and Israel, but between

the proponents of peace

and opponents of peace,"

King Hussein said.

Jordan, the King added,

has the longest border with

Israel and the two countries

are working jointly to pro

tect their security without

having international moni

tors or peacekeepers to

achieve that.

Saying Jordan was always

a victim of terrorism and

extremism, the King vowed

that the Kingdom would

work hard to counter ter

rorists and extremists.

The King said no organi

sation whatsoever can

plan or carry out any attac

against any target in Jord

an, be it against the Palest

ine Liberation Organisati

n (PLO) or Jordanian

polices.

The prosecutor general (Mahmoud Mansour Obeidat) is in charge of the case and is investigating it in accordance with the law," Mr. Tal said.

The slender charges, based on what is believed to be a lecture Mr. Shbeihat delivered three weeks ago in Irbid, carry a maximum sentence of one to three years imprisonment, according to Mr. Shbeihat's lawyer, Jawad Yunis. However, Mr. Yunis denied that his client was accused of sedition, which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Before and after his arrest, police carried out full inspection of Mr. Shbeihat's office and house, according to his wife, Rima. "They even tried to arrest Farhan," she said, referring to her 20-year-old son.

Opposition deputies criticised "the way in which

(Continued on page 7)

## Shbeihat arrested on charges of slandering the King, faces trial

By Sa'eda Kilani  
*Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN — The outspoken president of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) and independent Islamist, Leith Shbeihat, known for his forthright opposition to government's policies and to peace with Israel, was arrested Tuesday on charges of sedition and slandering His Majesty King Hussein.

A judicial source was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that a case had been filed against Mr. Shbeihat on charges of "violating the dignity of the King and encouraging sedition in violation of the penal code."

Relying to questions raised by Lower House of Parliament deputies in Saturday's session over Mr. Shbeihat's detention, the minister of justice, Hisham Ben Jassem Al Thani and other officials.

On the eve of his visit, Mr. Kabariti described Jordan-Qatari relations as distinguished and exemplary.

In an interview with the Qatari newspaper Al Qatan published Saturday, Mr. Kabariti confirmed that Jordan seized weapons headed for Iraq through Jordanian territory and said these weapons were advanced equipment used in long-range missiles.

The foreign minister said Jordan would not allow any party to use its territory to carry out activities considered hostile to Iraq.

He dismissed that efforts exerted by Jordan to achieve Iraq conciliation can be termed interference in internal Iraqi affairs, saying these attempts aimed at bavering all Iraqi parties to negotiate means to resolve differences.

He said His Majesty King Hussein's planned visit to Saudi Arabia was delayed because of the Saudi monarch's health condition.

He expressed hope that Kuwait would take a step towards Jordan and said Amman did all it can to improve relations with Kuwait.

Mr. Kabariti said Jordanian-Syrian ties improved after his recent meeting with his Syrian counterpart Farouk Sharara in Barcelona, "where things were brought back to track."

Officials said Mr. Kabariti would discuss with Qatari leaders the possibility of Jordan hosting a major terminal

(Continued on page 7)

lition, accused the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of having stage-managed the affair in a bid to preempt any easing of the five-year-old international sanctions imposed against Iraq.

"Russia is in no way connected to this cargo," the Russian Foreign Ministry told ITAR-TASS news agency. "Any attempt to accuse Russia of breaking international sanctions are groundless and are no more than the fruit of a sick imagination."

Noting media suggestions that the parts were for Soviet-made Scud missiles of the type Iraq fired at Israel and Saudi Arabia in the 1991 Gulf war, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Moscow was respecting sanctions in spite of the cost to its economy.

The Jordanian "middleman" in the deal was confirmed by sources close to the family to be in Baghdad. The sources also said the man, a Palestinian from Gaza, identified only by his initials as W.A.G., used to operate a JD 25,000 capital commercial firm registered in Jordan with an address in the Ila Al Ali district in Amman with a Jordanian partner but that the licence of the company was not renewed since 1992.

The Iraqi government, which on Friday disowned the cargo of 115 Russian gyroscopes, said by officials to be worth about \$25 mil

## Turkish opposition says it will renegotiate EU deal

ANKARA (AFP) — The opposition Democratic Left Party (DSP) will seek to renegotiate Turkey's customs union with the European Union (EU) if it wins power in elections this month, party leader Bülent Ecevit was quoted as saying on Saturday.

Mr. Ecevit told the Turkish Daily News that Prime Minister Tansu Ciller and Foreign Minister Deniz Baykal had sacrificed Turkey's international bargaining power for the sake of political gain at home.

"I think that it is an unforgivable mistake for both Ciller and Baykal to have turned the customs union into a chance to gain political prestige in the arena of domestic politics," he said. "A mistake because this has made Turkey lose her bargaining power."

Insisting that "every effort must be made to revise the customs union accord," he added:

"Can you imagine me at the head of a government or in a government and complying with the embargo imposed on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus by the European Union Court. That is not possible."

Mr. Ecevit was prime minister in 1974 when Turkey sent troops into Cyprus after Greek Cypriots carried out a nationalist coup supported by the military junta then in power in Athens. The northern part of the island later declared itself a separate republic, but Turkey is the only country to recognise it.

The European Parliament is due to ratify on December 13 the customs deal between Turkey and the European Union so it can be implemented on Jan. 1.

For several months the Turkish government has been waging an intense campaign to get the customs union

deal, concluded on March 6, ratified by Strasbourg.

Turkish voters go to the polls on Dec. 24 and political observers here say that the DSP could emerge as the leading left wing party and form a coalition with Mesut Yilmaz's right wing Motherland Party (ANAP), currently the main opposition party.

Ms. Ciller campaign ahead of the elections, on Friday promised to help Kurds who have fled their villages during the 11-year separatist rebel war, saying the state owed them a debt for not giving in to terrorism.

"After providing security and peace in the southeast, people who have fled their villages will be able to return," said Ms. Ciller, in her first campaign address in the largely Kurdish region before Dec. 24 polls.

Ms. Ciller's speech failed to rouse the crowd of some 2,000 in Diyarbakir, where analysts say the vote is likely to go to the pro-Kurdish party rather than Ms. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP).

In the southeast one of the main concerns is the evacuation of villages, which are often caught between rebels from the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and the Turkish security forces.

Both the government and human rights groups agree that at least some 2,000 settlements have been emptied, but they disagree on the reasons why.

Ms. Ciller, who spoke at midday under heavy guard, said the state had to help the villagers because "they refused to bow to terror," a reference to the PKK's fight for self-rule.

Human rights groups and local Kurds say most of the people have fled under pressure from the security forces, who want to break ties between the guerrillas and the villagers.

In her speech she promised to increase the number of houses, construct more pipelines to bring water into houses and end the guerrilla war.

But people in the region say such promises frequently have been made but rarely enacted.

In the 1991 general elections five of the province's eight deputies were elected from the pro-Kurdish party's slate. Another two came from the social democrats and one from DYP.

In Ankara Ms. Ciller appealed Saturday to the European Parliament to ratify the EU customs union.

The request came during a press conference with foreign journalists in which Ms. Ciller stressed she was committed to liberalisation and democratisation in Turkey.

"We are the only secular democracy among the world's 53 Muslim nations. Our citizens will not rest until we have joined the first ranks of Europe in every aspect of our national life," she stated.

Appealing to European legislators in Strasbourg to allow Turkish "integration" into Europe, she said: "The Turkish people, who have willingly sacrificed and stood with you at the frontiers of freedom, now look forward to standing with you to expand our mutual prosperity, as well as western values and our social and political well-being."

The parliament in Strasbourg is due to decide customs union on Wednesday but suggestions are the deal, concluded last March, will be formally accepted ahead of a Jan. 1, 1996 implementation.

Under the agreement the remaining tariffs on a wide range of goods and services will be dismantled except for Turkish agricultural exports.

Companies will acquire the right to set up business anywhere in the EU or Turkey.



ULTRA-ORTHODOX PROTEST: AN ultra-orthodox Jew falls while fleeing police after joining demonstrations in a religious neighbourhood of West Jerusalem to press demands to have a main road closed on the Sabbath holiday (AFF photo)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Former Israeli mayor to investigate POW killings

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has appointed former Tel Aviv mayor and retired General Shlomo Lahat to investigate the massacre of Egyptian prisoners of war (POWs) during 1956 and 1967 wars, officials said Saturday. Mr. Lahat is a former member of the opposition right-wing Likud but a peace "dove" who supported dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) before the 1993 autonomy deal which launched Palestinian self-rule. "We will name a retired general to investigate all that occurred with the prisoners," Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced Thursday in Cairo after talks with President Hosni Mubarak.

The Egyptian leader, whose country was the first Arab state to make peace with Israel, has for months urged the Jewish state to bring to justice those responsible for the killings. But Mr. Peres' predecessor Yitzhak Rabin refused, saying the crimes had occurred too long ago. The dispute erupted in August when an Israeli historian revealed that Israeli soldiers massacred hundreds of Egyptians after they lay down their arms. Mass graves were then found in the northern Sinai peninsula.

### 93 drug traffickers killed in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Ninety-three drug traffickers have been killed and 37 others wounded in clashes with police in the past four months, Interior Minister Ali Beshtari said Saturday. Mr. Beshtari, quoted by Kayhan newspaper, said 144 traffickers and other armed smugglers had been arrested between August and November. He gave no casualty figure for the police force. The authorities seized more than 15 tonnes of various drugs in the eight months up to Nov. 21, according to official figures. Around 900 policemen have been killed in clashes with armed drug traffickers in the past 10 years, including 58 last year. A total of 124 traffickers were also killed in 1994. Iran, a transit route for drugs coming from Pakistan and Afghanistan destined for European and Middle East markets, has stepped up the fight against major drug networks.

### Kabbari briefs U.N. official in Jordan's stand on refugees

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabbari on Saturday met with United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Peter Hans for talks on issues related to Palestinian refugees residing in Jordan.

Mr. Kabbari briefed Mr. Hans, who is expected to succeed Iler Turkmen as United Nations Refugees and Works Agency (UNRWA) commissioner-general, on Jordan's role and responsibilities towards organisations extending relief services to refugees and displaced persons.

The minister also briefed the U.N. official on Jordan's stands which call for resolving the problem of refugees in accordance with international legitimacy and law, mainly United Nations Security Council Resolution 194.

He said the Kingdom's position will be made clear at a meeting of the refugees working group this week in Geneva.

The minister referred to the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, saying article eight of the treaty called for finding a solution of the problem in accordance with the international law which provides for the right of return or compensation.

Mr. Hans commended Jordan's humanitarian efforts and praised His Majesty King Hussein's decision to grant passports to Palestinians, noting that this decision would be of great benefit to the Palestinians.

A decision endorsing the appointment of Mr. Hans as UNRWA commissioner general is expected to be endorsed by the agency's advisory panel in the second half of this month.

### Ten human rights activists to go on trial in Ankara

ANKARA (AFP) — Ankara prosecutors have launched proceedings against 10 human rights activists, following publication of a memorial book, according to a statement published here Saturday.

Those charged include Yavuz Onen, chairman of the Turkish Human Rights Foundation (THRF), lawyer Turgut Inal, formerly chairman of the bar in Balikesir, northwest Turkey and eight other members of the human rights foundation, the organisation said in a statement.

According to the Aukara court, the article by Mr. Birbal, who is a candidate for the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party in Dec. 24 elections, contains elements which show "contempt" state security forces.

In the statement, Mr. Onen said the opening of proceedings was part of "a campaign of repression against democracy and human rights champions," in Turkey.

The European Parliament has insisted Ankara improve its human rights record as a precondition for customs union which the Turkish government is anxious to achieve.

For several months, the Turkish government has been waging an intense campaign to get the customs union deal concluded on March 6, ratified by Strasbourg (see separate story).

## Both sides rigged vote in Egypt polls — rights group

CAIRO (Agencies) — The government and opposition groups were both involved in widespread fraud and violence in the run-offs of Egypt's legislative elections this week, a human rights group said Friday.

However, the Egyptian Human Rights Organisation said the main targets of police intervention in the second round vote Wednesday were Islamic opposition candidates.

The rights group said it had details of "interventions by security services, criminal and violent acts involving supporters of government candidates as well as their opponents, which led to fraud in numerous districts."

"The interventions by the security services in the second round were aimed at supporting the candidates of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), in particular against Islamic fundamentalist candidates," it added.

Ninety-nine victorious independents joined the ranks of the NDP of President Hosni Mubarak Friday to bring its total of seats to 416 out of 444 in parliament.

Opposition parties, which accuse the government of a massive election fraud campaign to squeeze them out of the assembly, were credited with only 13 seats.

Only one of remaining 15 independents elected as de-

putes is a member of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood.

The human rights group said Brotherhood candidates who were said to have lost seats in the Nile Delta region had been the victims of fraud.

It said three polling stations in the Al-Bataan constituency were attacked by NDP supporters who seized electoral lists, voting cards and official papers as security services stood by.

In some cases, police intervened in favour of leading opposition candidates, "in an attempt to improve the image of the new parliament after the large-scale government intervention in the first round (on November 29) because of which no opposition candidates had been elected."

However, in most cases police adopted an attitude of "passive neutrality" when faced with NDP violence and "intervened with force to stop similar acts in favour of NDP opponents," the watchdog said.

The organisation renewed its appeal to Mr. Mubarak to annul the vote and appoint an "impartial government" to organise new elections.

The fraud reports in the first round led to a court battle after an administrative court ruled that results in one third of the seats must be cancelled due to rigging.

A higher court was to hear

the appeal to Mr. Mubarak to annul the vote and appoint an "impartial government" to organise new elections.

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## Renowned fashion designer attends NHF working session

AMMAN (J.T.) — The internationally renowned fashion designer Oscar de la Renta Saturday joined designers from the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) and the Jordan Design and Trade Centre (JDTC) for an extended working session at the JDTC, according to a Royal Court statement.

Mr. de la Renta visited the NHF last May and was impressed by its achievements in revitalising and raising the standard of traditional and contemporary Jordanian designs and has offered to collaborate with NHF designers to improve the quality of NHF's garment and home furnishings production, as well as introduce a new line of clothing, the statement said.

During the session, Mr. de la Renta said that he was "very excited to be in Jordan working with intelligent and talented local

designers, with whom he will cooperate in diversifying and increasing NHF products in the international market."

According to the statement, Mr. de la Renta will introduce NHF fabrics, designs and clothes in his spring 1997 collection.

Her Majesty Queen Noor thanked Mr. de la Renta for his sincere interest, concern and generous contribution of his time, ideas and expertise, the statement said.

She expressed her admiration for his distinctive talent and her appreciation of his commitment to this fruitful partnership, which will be mutually enriching and will further the development of traditional designs and marketing talents.

Mr. de la Renta, a native of the Dominican Republic, is the first American to

design for a French couture house.

He served as the President of the Council of Fashion Designers of America for five years, who subsequently conferred upon him their Lifetime Achievement Award, according to the statement.

Mr. de la Renta's contributions are not limited to the world of fashion; he established La Casa del Niño (The Home of the Children) in 1982, which is a non-profit institution dedicated to the care and well-being of homeless children and young adults in the Dominican Republic.

The Home, which is funded by private contributions, depends on the proceeds of Mr. de la Renta's fashion shows to fund its educational, medical and vocational training services, according to the statement.

## Trade fair aims to promote further Jordanian-Lebanese exchange

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abu Ragheb Saturday opened a nine-day Lebanese trade fair at Philadelphia Hotel in Amman and described as "high quality" the Lebanese products on display.

The trade fair which sells products directly to the public is a good opportunity for Jordanian consumers to examine Lebanon's industrial goods and it is also an opportunity for the private sector of Jordan and Lebanon to launch strong economic and trade relations, the minister said in a brief address.

Lebanese Ambassador to Jordan William Habib, who was present at the opening ceremony, praised the

Lebanese goods on display and tribute to Jordanian authorities for helping to organise the fair in Jordan.

Organised by the Lebanese Industrialists' Society and the Beirut Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the Lebanese embassy in Jordan, the fair displays a variety of garments, shoes, leather products, cosmetics, glassware, silverware, and household items.

Mr. Habib said Jordan's industrial fair, to be organised in Beirut in March next year, will be facilitated by the Lebanese government.

Under a trade and economic protocol signed by Jordan and Lebanon in 1992, the two countries agreed to boost fares for each

other's industrial goods.

A total of 35 major Lebanese industrial businesses are taking part in this fair, according to Mr. Habib, who pointed out that the bilateral protocol allows the two countries to exchange products worth JD 5 million for each side each year.

Mr. Habib said the Lebanese industrialists are determined to do all in their power to promote Jordanian-Lebanese trade relations by facilitating trade exchanges, cancelling fees and customs' duties on the entry of goods and launching joint industrial ventures with the Jordanian private sector.

## The dialectics of oriental art in Hind Nasser's paintings

By Wolfgang Becker

"The West-Eastern divan" by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is the most famous anthology of Persian poetry and it is one of those books and pictures which have contributed to the image of the Orient in the mind of the Occidentals.

Looking at the paintings of Hind Nasser for me means at first looking from the Occident, looking from the north.

I live in a country where the palette of painters reflects the many greens of our vegetation, the silvery tones of our skies and the wetness of our atmosphere.

But then, looking from the north also means to look at the Orient as if it were a dream compensating for the lack of primary colours and experiences.

Goethe did never visit the country of Hafis, but many European painters since the 19th century travelled through the Orient around the Mediterranean and brought back the emotional impact of landscapes never seen before.

Until the time of the fauves and the expressionists of 1910, the occidental notion of the Orient was bound to images, to subjects, and it was only then that it concentrated on a colour scheme and abstract references.

What happened when Kandinsky saw one of his paintings put upside down and discovered its abstract qualities?

At that time Sigmund Freud had analysed man's dreams and Roentgen had invented the X-rays.

For the first time in many centuries the human being became transparent as well as the inner landscape which surrounded him.

This is what Kandinsky discovered: That the exterior landscape he had tried to depict was suddenly superseded by another image

which was the landscape of his own sensations.

This constant dialogue between an ever-changing inner landscape becoming richer with the constant growth of a personality and extrovert discoveries can be the dominant source of a creative process.

When I met the Jordanian artist Fahrelnissa Zeid in the late 80's I was extremely fascinated by the persuasive force of this source, and I needed some time to understand that it was fuelled by the deep conviction to live between two cultures and to serve as a vehicle of communication between the Orient and the Occident.

Fahrelnissa Zeid had lived, as an Oriental, in the cultural centre of Europe, in Paris and had been surrounded by the strongest representatives of the Ecole de Paris.

Hind Nasser belongs to those to whom Fahrelnissa Zeid transferred all her convictions and experiences, all her knowledge and wisdom.

Hind Nasser belongs to the next generation which lives and works in its home countries, liberated from dominant art trends created in cultural capitals.

Her work allows to continue our talk about the dialectics of interior and exterior landscapes. The landscapes which surround her are those of an Oriental country, and clear, unmixed primary colours dominate her landscape paintings.

Looking at these paintings I begin to admire an artistic personality who covers, with great inventive force and discipline, a wide range of images of the inside and of the outside world, of the "northern" darkness of the soul and the "southern" beauties of the world.

Dr. Becker is Director of Ludwig Museum in Aachen, Germany. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times. An exhibition of Hind Nasser's paintings will be opened at Darat Al Funun Dec. 11.

In the dialectics of this text the interior landscape is tormented, dramatic—and, if I may say so, northern like the paintings by Edward Munch.

The exterior landscapes are southern. It is easy to see in them the reflections of paintings by Matisse and, looking from the north again, some of the most beautiful works of the series seem to reflect the colour schemes of Mogul paintings and miniatures.

In the sophisticated art world in which I live, mass media, colour photography and TV have exerted a strong influence on contemporary art. The primary colour scheme of red, yellow and blue which is basic to technological image production has strongly affected our perception.

The "sharp focus realism"—painters since the 70's have used the authenticity of colour photographs and TV images in their paintings and they have created, in our customs of perception, a flowing zone in which a photograph develops painterly values and a painting carries photographic elements.

Where the exterior landscapes of Hind Nasser are the most realistic they seem to touch this borderline where the suggestions of photographic illusionism start to work.

Looking at these paintings I begin to admire an artistic personality who covers, with great inventive force and discipline, a wide range of images of the inside and of the outside world, of the "northern" darkness of the soul and the "southern" beauties of the world.

They will be joined by more than a dozen Austrian academics and officials at the Arab Thought Forum in Amman today and Sunday at 10 a.m.

## Arab World must increase efforts in food production investment — minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — The time has come for Jordan and other countries of the region to generate meaningful regional cooperation to build up their economies and to intensify efforts in the increase of investments in food production and other economic sectors, Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Ahu Ragheb said Saturday in an address to a regional meeting organised by the Arab Union of Food Industries (AUFI).

Following years of instability, the Middle East region is, for the first time, enjoying an era of peace and stability which are important elements for achieving balanced and sustainable economic development, the minister said.

Jordan's experience in food production in spite of water shortages and limited arable and cultivable land has enabled the country to have a pioneering role in agricultural production, the minister said.

Mr. Ahu Ragheb was

Highness Crown Prince Hassan in opening the six-day meeting, "Investments and Food Security in the Arab World", which is being attended by nearly 200 delegates, all specialists in agriculture and food processing industries as well as representatives of a number of regional organisations.

For Jordan and other Arab states, food security is a vital component for ensuring economic stability and economic security, the minister said.

AUFI Secretary General Falah Sa'ed Jaber said the union is encouraging investments in food processing industries.

Arab League Secretary General Ismat Abdul Majeed sent a message which was read out to the meeting and in which he called on Arab organisations to give priority to investments in food security projects.

Mr. Jaber said the delegations will explore the role

of regional funds and commercial and development

hanks in financing agricultural projects and will review experiments in food industries in a number of participating countries.

The conference was organised in cooperation with the Amman Chamber of Industry, the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of

Commerce, the Jordanian Businessmen Association and the Arab Chamber of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce.



Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Ahu Ragheb Saturday addresses a meeting on Investments and Food Security in the Arab World (Petra photo)

## ATF to host Arab-Austrian dialogue

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arab Thought Forum (ATF) today hosts a two-day symposium on the Austrian-Arab dialogue with more than a dozen representatives of Austria.

Chaired by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the meeting will be co-sponsored by the Bruno Kriesky Forum of Austria.

Three different seminars during the two-day event will discuss the Middle East's Development Outlook, Austria's Foreign Policy towards the Arab World and Democracy.

Two papers will be presented during each seminar, one from each side.

Arab representatives presenting papers are Issam Chalaby, former Iraqi Minister of Oil; former prime minister of Jordan Taha Masri; and Dr. Mahdi Al Hafez, coordinator of Arab Industrial and Development Projects at UNIDO in Vienna.

Participating from Jordan will be Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan Ali, Dr. Mohammad Adnan Bakhit, president of Al Al Bayt University; Nader Dahabi, executive president of Royal Jordanian Airline; Dr. Kamel Ahu Jaber, secretary general of the World Affairs Council; Awad Abo Obeid, ambassador, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Hala Sabri, executive director of administration at the Arab Thought Forum; Thabit Al Taher, former minister of energy and chairman of Jordan International Consulting Group; Dr. Hisham Khatri, former minister of planning; Zubair Khouri, chairman of the Housing Bank; Dr. Abdul Salam Majali, former prime minister; Ina'am Mutti, consultant to the Queen; Dr. Hanna Odeh, former minister of finance and chairman of Jordan Dead Sea Industries company; and Dr. Oumileil Ali, secretary general of the Arab Thought Forum.

Bawadi's "Season Of Joy" exhibition, a collection of rugs and ceramics, at the National Ceramics Centre, Khalsa from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tel. 825241, 834688. (Until Dec. 12)

Photography by poet Ibrahim Nasrallah entitled "The Autobiography of an Eye" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. (Until Jan. 4)

Photography exhibition "Biblical Itineraries" at the French Cultural Centre. (Until Dec. 30)

## Muslim militant pleads not guilty to slander

By Rana Husseini  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Muslim militant Atta Abu Rishieb, 53, accused of slandering against His Majesty King Hussein, and belonging to an illegal organisation, Saturday pleaded not guilty to both charges.

Mr. Abu Rishieb, spokesman for the illegal Hezbollah, who earlier confessed to slandering the King in an Oct. 6 newspaper interview, told the court that he was innocent of all charges after the state prosecutor general read the charge sheet.

At the beginning of the court session, Abdul Fatah Lafi, one of three attorneys

defending Mr. Abu Rishieb, contested for the third time the court's jurisdiction to hear the case.

During the past month, Mr. Abu Rishieb's attorneys claimed that the case should be heard at civil courts "because it is a Press and Publications Law case."

The lawyers insisted that Mr. Abu Rishieb's interview reflected political thoughts and that his thoughts were based on personal interpretations of Islamic Sharia.

Presiding Judge Hafez Amin rejected Mr. Lafi's assertions saying that "it case is within the court's jurisdiction because it involves slander against

His Majesty King Hussein." Judge Amin also turned down a third request by Mr. Abu Rishieb's attorneys to free their defendant on bail.

Mr. Abu Rishieb, who has frequently been arrested over the past 10 years for militant activities, was apprehended by authorities on Oct. 15, nine days after he was interviewed by the Arabic weekly Al Hiwar in which he allegedly slandered the King.

The charge sheet said the suspect confessed to slandering the King when questioned by the authorities. "The King and his regime in Jordan are unjust and corrupt because they do not rule in accordance with God's teachings," the

charge sheet quoted him as saying.

"My view of King Hussein is always the same. As long as he does not abide by God's teaching, he is unjust and corrupt."

At the end of the court session, the state prosecutor general asked Judge Amin to postpone the case because court witness Abdullah Mohammad Bani Issa, editor of Al Hiwar newspaper failed to show up in court.

The judge set Dec. 12 for a new court session.

If convicted of slandering King Hussein, Mr. Abu Rishieb could face up to three years' imprisonment.

## Agricultural meeting focuses on pest control

AMMAN (Petra) — Agriculture Minister Mansour Ben Tarif said Saturday Jordan is using as little pesticide as possible and that the country is currently adopting an integrated system of pest control for agricultural purposes.

The results of laboratory tests and analyses have proved that Jordanian agricultural products are of the best specifications, the minister said in an opening address to a five-day symposium on the subject of integrated systems for combating farm pests.

Speaking of the dangers in the continual use of pesticides to crops and human health, the minister said that certain pests have come to resist pesticides, with the result that spraying becomes futile.

The minister thanked the AOAD which, he said, has contributed towards promoting research and the training of personnel programmes designed to promote the agricultural sector.

AOAD Director General Abdur Hamid Kayed outlined the organisation's programmes and plans to help Arab states promote their agricultural production and improve the quality of their produce.

Dr. Kayed noted that the present symposium will be focusing attention on integrated programmes

for combating pests, with a view to helping Arab countries increase their food production and reduce the Arab World's losses due to pests. The losses are estimated at between 35 and 50 per cent of their overall annual food output.

The meeting was organised by the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (AOAD) in cooperation with GTZ and the Ministry of Agriculture.

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Tel: 829536

Telecommunications Corporation Tender Announcement for Tender Number 79/95 (First Stage) Procurement for Integrated Software and Hardware Solution for the Telecommunications Corporation Core Operations

The Telecommunications Corporation Announces Tender Number 79/95 for the "Procurement of Integrated Software and Hardware Solution for the Telecommunications Corporation Core Operations".

The project (on turn-key basis) consists of supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Software and Hardware which support the core operations of the Telecommunications Corporation such as billing, customer services, fault tolerance management and disaster recovery system.

The tender consists of two stages, the first stage requires bidders to submit technical bids only; following evaluation of first stage bids, the purchaser will invite bidders who have submitted a technically accepted first stage bid to participate in the second stage bid in which bidders will be asked to submit their complete bids.

Specialised companies whose countries meet the Guidelines of Procurement under World Bank loans are hereby invited to submit their bids in accordance with the terms, conditions and technical specifications contained in the tender documents which can be obtained from the Tendara Section / Telecommunications Corporation Headquarters, tower building against a non-refundable fee of Jordanian Dinars two-hundred (JD200).

## Khasbulatov withdraws from Dec. 17 elections in Chechenya

GROZNY, Russia (R) — A major contender for the leadership of Chechenya, Ruslan Khasbulatov, pulled out of his elections Saturday, a week before the poll, saying the ballot could trigger fresh bloodshed.

Mr. Khasbulatov, who led a hard-line revolt against President Boris Yeltsin in Moscow in 1993, told a news conference: "By calling this poll Moscow and regional authorities are preparing conditions for the resumption of hostilities."

"I will not take part in these bloodstained elections."

The election of a head of state for Chechenya will coincide with parliamentary polls across Russia on Dec. 17. Mr. Khasbulatov's withdrawal is likely to be seen as a major blow to Kremlin plans for legitimising a new leadership in the north Caucasus province.

Separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, who has spearheaded resistance to Russia's attempt to subdue the region, has vowed to disrupt both polls in Chechenya.

Mr. Khasbulatov, who was chairman of the Russian parliament from 1991 to 1993, had initially registered as a candidate

along with the current head of the Moscow-installed administration Doku Zavgayev and two minor candidates.

Earlier this year Mr. Yeltsin encouraged his one-time rival to join peace efforts in Chechenya.

Nearly 2,000 Russian troops have been killed in Moscow's onslaught on Chechenya which began on Dec. 11, 1994. Around 40,000 civilians died according to unofficial figures.

Chechenya boycotted the previous parliamentary poll in Russia in December 1993 and Moscow sees the vote this month as a means of consolidating its hold in the region and weakening Mr. Dudayev.

Earlier this week Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Mr. Zavgayev, former Communist Party chief in the republic, signed an accord in Moscow which offered a limited autonomy for Chechenya but preserved it as a part of Russia.

Mr. Yeltsin Saturday appealed to the Chechens to elect their new leader peacefully.

Mr. Yeltsin has signed a programme for the economic revival of Chechenya.

which, through a newly elected authority, would pump considerable funds into a region devastated by seven months of war.

"Moscow is trying to legalise the puppet regime, which meets resistance from the majority of the population," Mr. Khasbulatov said.

Mr. Khasbulatov's withdrawal effectively ruins hopes for electing a representative authority in Chechenya as it will leave Chechens no third way between Mr. Zavgayev and Mr. Dudayev.

"If the (local) election takes place Chechenya will finally be split into two dwarf republics," he added, referring to the fact that southern parts of Chechenya are still controlled by the rebels.

Separatist fighters proved they are capable of effective guerrilla acts in June when a field commander, Shamil Basayev, raided the southern Russian town of Budenovsk.

More than 100 people were killed and about 60 were wounded Monday in a car bomb explosion in Grozny, just round the corner from a heavily guarded Russian administrative headquarters.

The talks led to a partial

military agreement which was never fully implemented. Mr. Dudayev still seeks independence while Moscow insists that the region remains part of Russia.

Sporadic clashes between troop and rebels continued throughout the truce and intensified after the Russian military commander in Chechenya, Anatoly Romanov, was badly wounded in a bomb blast in October. Since then there have been no more talks with the rebels and violence has increased.

RIA news agency quoted army Lieutenant-General Alexander Naumov as saying Saturday that the situation in the region now was in fact worse than a year ago.

Gen. Naumov commands Defence Ministry troops in Chechenya while the overall command in the region is wielded by an Interior Ministry general.

At least 11 people were killed and about 60 were wounded Monday in a car bomb explosion in Grozny, just round the corner from a heavily guarded Russian administrative headquarters.

**1 killed, 70 hurt as strike hits Bangladesh**

DHAKA (R) — A general strike turned violent in Bangladesh Saturday when police and rioters fought running street battles with tear gas and home-made hand bombs.

One activist died and about 70 people were injured.

The 72-hour strike, which began Saturday, is part of a campaign by major opposition groups, led by the Awami League of Sheikh Hasina, to force Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to resign ahead of general elections scheduled for Jan. 18.

The stoppage virtually closed down the entire country.

Police said one activist of the orthodox Jamaat-E-Islami party was stabbed to death in northeastern town of Sylhet around midnight Friday ahead of the strike.

Jamaat leaders said Abdul Karim, a student of Sylhet M.C. College, was killed by activists of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Police said they were still trying to identify the killer.

Jamaat activists Saturday ransacked the Sylhet office of the BNP's student wing, the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, in apparent retaliation, police said.

Jamaat and the Jatiya Party led by jailed ex-President Hossain Mohammad Ershad are active allies of the League.

They accuse Mrs. Khaleda's government of having rigged a 1994 parliamentary by-election and of sweeping corruption, and say no election with her in office would be fair.

Mrs. Khaleda, reported to be ill and resting at home, has shown no sign of bowing to opposition pressure.

The illness is a blow to the man often called the "king of pop" because he has been trying to rebuild a career that suffered from 1993 allegations he molested a 12-year-old boy.

Jackson denied the molestation charges, settling out of court for a sum estimated to be as much as several million dollars.

The cable show would have been his first appearance since the release in June of his album *History Past, Present And Future*, Book 1 which sold 1.7 million in the United States and 8.5 million worldwide, a disappointing number by his standards.

In the doctors' first news conference since Jackson was admitted to the intensive care unit, they said he had a viral intestinal infection and that his recovery could take weeks.

"His situation would be serious now," Dr. Allan Metzger, Jackson's personal physician from California, told reporters. "I would not characterise it as life-threatening as of this moment. We don't feel there is any ultimate real jeopardy in the future to his



Singer Diana Ross (Centre) arrives at the New York hospital to visit Michael Jackson, who was hospitalised after collapsing during a rehearsal for a TV special (AFP photo)

### Jackson's treatment saved his life — doctors

NEW YORK (R) — Pop star Michael Jackson might have died had he not received prompt medical attention when he collapsed during a rehearsal earlier this week, his doctors said Friday night.

Asked whether the 37-year-old Jackson's condition was life-threatening after he fainted at the Beacon Theatre in Manhattan Wednesday, Dr. William Alleyne of Beth Israel North Hospital told a news conference:

"Absolutely. He had shock, he had a cardiac rhythm that if not corrected with volume would have warranted shocking the chest."

"We were fortunate that we were able with the assistance of the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) team and the emergency team at Beth Israel to rapidly replace his fluids and restore an adequate blood pressure," Dr. Alleyne said.

In the doctors' first news conference since Jackson was admitted to the intensive care unit, they said he had a viral intestinal infection and that his recovery could take weeks.

"His situation would be serious now," Dr. Allan Metzger, Jackson's personal physician from California, told reporters. "I would not characterise it as life-threatening as of this moment. We don't feel there is any ultimate real jeopardy in the future to his

life."

The hospital said he would remain in intensive care for tests and treatment and that his condition was improving. The doctors said Thursday that his fainting episode might have been caused by an irregular heartbeat combined with dehydration and that he was also being treated for gastritis.

Jackson collapsed during rehearsals for a Home Box Office (HBO) cable television special that was to be broadcast Sunday night. The concert with French mime Marcel Marceau, entitled "Michael Jackson: One Night Only," has been indefinitely postponed. Promoters estimated that the show would draw a worldwide audience of 250 million people.

The illness is a blow to the man often called the "king of pop" because he has been trying to rebuild a career that suffered from 1993 allegations he molested a 12-year-old boy.

Jackson denied the molestation charges, settling out of court for a sum estimated to be as much as several million dollars.

The cable show would have been his first appearance since the release in June of his album *History Past, Present And Future*, Book 1 which sold 1.7 million in the United States and 8.5 million worldwide, a disappointing number by his standards.

### Experts hunt Ebola virus cases in Ivory Coast

ABIDJAN (R) — Medical experts scoured Ivory Coast's southwestern border with war-shattered Liberia Saturday for fresh cases of Ebola after the deadly virus surfaced in a refugee there.

Ivory Coast's director of communal health, Aminata Diarra, said the Liberian refugee, a man of 25, continued to recover and no further cases had been reported.

"For the moment there is no cause for concern," she told Reuters in the administrative capital Abidjan, adding:

"We have teams there conducting an epidemiological survey to make sure that no one has slipped through the screening net of our normal health care system."

The virus, which triggers uncontrollable bleeding and for which there is no known cure, killed 244 people in and around the western Zaire city of Kikwit between January and August. Of the 315 known cases of infection, only 71 survived.

Officials say the latest victim came from a village in Liberia, where more than five years of civil war have made many regions no-go areas. He turned up in Gozo west of the border town of Tabou, where many of Ivory Coast's 400,000

Liberian refugees live.

The Ivorian government said in a statement on its Friday evening television news that the Liberian, whose condition set alarm bells ringing Wednesday, was an isolated case.

A team made up of specialists from the Health Ministry, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Institute Pasteur in Paris and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) and the (office of the) U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees had gone to the area and was continuing its investigations," it said.

"The necessary measures of prevention and isolation appropriate to the situation have been taken," it added.

Named after a river in northern Zaire where it first appeared in 1976, the virus is spread by direct contact with infected blood or other bodily secretions.

Ivory Coast maintained a discreet silence on an isolated case at the end of 1994 involving a Swiss researcher working on monkeys in its western forest of Tai.

In a statement in May at the height of the Zaire outbreak, the government said the virus was of a less deadly strain and the researcher had recovered.

This could be a criminal job by the pro-government activists who wanted to shift the blame on us," Mr. Chowdhury told reporters.

Local officials earlier said the fire destroyed all records in the commission office.

"They doused everything inside the office with petrol and just torched it," one said.

Witnesses said about 70 people were injured in sporadic clashes between police and protesters in the port city.

Police used tear gas and batons, and protesters buried home-made bombs, sticks and rocks.

Police arrested at least 10 people in Chittagong. "The city is very tense now," one local journalist told Reuters.

In Dhaka, protesters burned several vehicles.

They attacked several hundred supporters of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) staging an "anti-strike" rally in the city's Dhanmondi area, witnesses said.

Smoke from dozens of improvised bombs or grenades buried at police filled the air in this city of nine million.

Dhaka's streets, normally teeming with people, cars and rickshaws, were virtually empty. Shops and offices were closed.

Trains, buses and ferries were at a standstill. Airports officials said most domestic flights were cancelled or delayed.

**Godzilla farewell draws big movie crowds**

TOKYO (R) — Film fans queued for up to two hours and theatres were full Saturday for Japan's most eagerly awaited movie opening in years — *A Farewell To Godzilla*. In an unprecedentedly successful opening for a recent Japanese film, the attraction was the death of a monster which terrified adults and children alike in Japan for four decades. After 21 films, the radioactive dinosaur born in 1954 finally meets his match at the claws of an equally bizarre creation called "The Destroyer." "I was scared and sad that he's died," said a wide-eyed Masashi Kokaji, seven, as he left a downtown Tokyo cinema with his parents.

The queues like those for *Godzilla Vs Destroyer* are normally seen for popular Hollywood hits but this time it was a Japanese filmmaker who was rubbing his hands as turnstiles kept clicking at 200 cinemas throughout Japan. Toho Company spokesman Kenichi Hayamaka said the firm, which has made all the *Godzilla* movies, expected about 300,000 people to see the six-week opening run. He told Reuters the company expected a record profit of three billion Yen (\$30 million) from just the opening weeks.

### Grateful Dead calls it quits

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — The Grateful Dead rock group has decided to disband following the death of its leader Jerry Garcia in August, the surviving band members announced Friday.

They accuse Mrs. Khaleda's government of having rigged a 1994 parliamentary by-election and of sweeping corruption, and say no election with her in office would be fair.

Mrs. Khaleda, reportedly to be ill and resting at home, has shown no sign of bowing to opposition pressure.

The illness is a blow to the man often called the "king of pop" because he has been trying to rebuild a career that suffered from 1993 allegations he molested a 12-year-old boy.

Jackson denied the molestation charges, settling out of court for a sum estimated to be as much as several million dollars.

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"His situation would be serious now," Dr. Allan Metzger, Jackson's personal physician from California, told reporters. "I would not characterise it as life-threatening as of this moment. We don't feel there is any ultimate real jeopardy in the future to his

### Kashmir captives 'left or switched'

SRINAGAR, India (R) — The shadowy Al-Faran group that seized four Western tourists in Kashmir has handed them over to local guerrillas or abandoned them in the Himalayan Mountains, an Indian defence spokesman said Saturday.

The spokesman said Indian authorities drew the conclusion from the interrogation of three guerrillas as said to belong to Al-Faran. They were captured in a clash with Indian security forces last Monday.

"Interrogation of the three apprehended mercenaries... revealed that the Al-Faran has presumably abandoned the four foreign hostages somewhere in the high ranges or maybe banded them over to some local militant group," Defence Ministry spokesman Hariharan said in a statement.

A communiqué for the Pakistan-based Harkat Ul

Ansar guerrilla group said earlier in the week that the guerrillas killed in the clash came from its ranks.

Some Indian officials believe Al-Faran, which was unknown before the four hostages were taken in July, is front for Harkat.

India has refused to bow to the guerrillas' demands and ruled out a rescue operation for fear of endangering the hostage's lives.

Al-Faran contacts Indian authorities from time to time to press its demands, but there has been no communication for almost two weeks.

"For the last 13 days there has been no contact but we have not given up hope. We are still expecting that Al-Faran will talk to us and end the crisis before Christmas," an Indian official dealing with the hostage crisis in Srinagar told Reuters.

Chitwan said the inclusion of governors in the new chamber would violate the constitutional principle of separation of executive and legislative branches of government.

They also argued that the law's insistence on the direct election of governors violated the rights of rights of individual regions and

republics.

Political experts say that even if these hurdles are overcome it is far from clear how the new upper house will operate. They fear that the regional bosses, some from areas thousands of kilometres from Moscow, will have no free time to come to the capital and sit in the upper house.

According to the constitution the Federation Council has wide powers to hold up legislation, appoint senior state officials and schedule presidential elections.

It also has to approve presidential decrees imposing a state of emergency or martial law, and can remove the president from office if he is impeached.

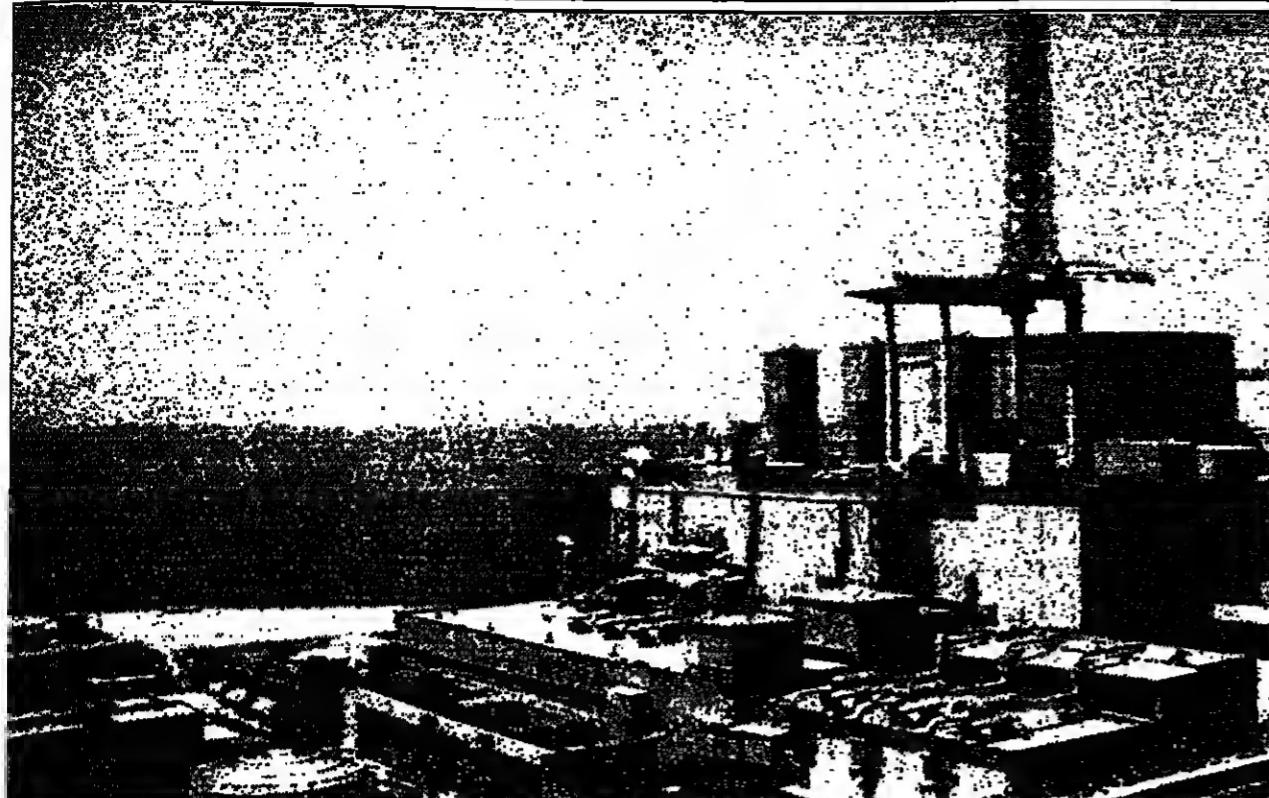
Political analysts say the new upper house may have an important role as a buffer between Mr. Yeltsin and the new Duma, to be elected on Dec. 17, which is expected to be more hostile to the president than its predecessor.

Their query said the inclusion of governors in the new chamber would violate the constitutional principle of separation of executive and legislative branches of government.

They also argued that the law's insistence on the direct election of governors violated the rights of rights of individual regions and

republics.

Deputy Secretary William Perry, asked about



File photo dated May 1991 shows Japan's Monju fast-breeder reactor in Tsuruga, western Japan. The reactor was shut down manually after a fire alarm rang because of a leak in the cooling system. (AFP photo)

## Japan reactor leak causes political fallout

TOKYO (R) — Japan faced demands for sweeping changes in its ambitious nuclear power programme Saturday as officials began investigations of a massive coolant leak at a prototype fast-breeder nuclear reactor.

Japan's most advanced reactor, Monju, was manually shut down Friday after liquid sodium leaked from the cooling system, reactor operators said.

Heavy smoke caused by a reaction between the leaking sodium and air delayed technicians' efforts to investigate the leak, officials of the governmental Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC) said.

Politicians from the western coastal prefecture of Fukui, where Monju is located, blasted the PNC for its delay in announcing Friday's accident.

Fukui Governor Yukio Kurita criticised the corporation for waiting nearly one hour after the shutdown before contacting his government.

"Along with the delay in the advisory bulletin, subsequent reports were insufficient," the governor said in a statement. "This is an extremely regrettable loss of the prefecture's trust in the overall safety of Monju."

Kurita demanded a thorough investigation of Friday's leak, a "change of consciousness" about accident-prone relations and a complete revision of Monju's operating schedule.

An official of the environmental group Greenpeace told Reuters the sodium coolant leak — a technical fault common in fast-breeder programmes — could prove politically fatal to Monju.

"Even if there has been no radiation leak, the political embarrassment is so great that it could spell the end of the Monju programme," said Greenpeace Japan Director John Willis.

Monju, at Tsuruga, 320 kilometres west of Tokyo, started operations in August after a decade of technical delays and a cost of 590 billion Yen (\$6.2 billion), double that of a conventional 500 megawatt light-water reactor.

Although the PNC acknowledged the sodium leak was "a very serious setback for the fast-breeder reactor", it said there was no radioactive harm to the environment from the accident.

Masayasu Miyabayashi, head of the Science and Technology Agency's Nuclear Safety Bureau, told a news conference he took the first such accident in Japan "seriously".

Monju will eventually produce 280 megawatts of electricity, making it the world's second largest fast-breeder reactor after the French Super-Phénix.

PNC planned the start-up last April but a pre-test run was shut down in March because of a problem with its steam control system. It was restarted in May only to be shut down again due to further problems.

PNC hoped Monju would begin supplying electricity to the commercial grid some time next year.

Japan relies on nuclear reactors for 33 per cent of its power needs and plans to raise that to 42 per cent by 2010.

## Burundi army mounts operation against rebels

BUJUMBURA (R) — The Tutsi-dominated army in the tiny central African state of Burundi pressed on with a drive against Hutu rebels in the hills behind Bujumbura and at least 53 people were said to have died in four days of fighting.

"Operations are continuing in hills behind Bujumbura," said Defence Ministry spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Longin Minani Friday.

Burundi's ethnic violence pits the Tutsi government army against members of the majority Hutu community who have tried for years to end Tutsi domination of state power.

Western diplomats said the operation was the biggest to date to flush out

Hutu rebels in Bujumbura. U.N. military sources told Reuters at least 53 people had been killed in the fighting. Relief agencies said about 8,500 displaced people had camped around the Statue of Unity, a national monument in the east of the capital.

Another large group was reported to be sheltering in a church at Sorgweza village 3.5 kilometres east of Bujumbura, said an aid official who asked not to be named.

Tensions ran high in Bujumbura, with diplomats and religious sources speaking of a massacre in a church where macabre and knives were used. This could not be immediately confirmed.

A Reuters correspondent

Radio Burundi had Thursday put the death toll from four days of clashes in the eastern suburbs of Matanga, Kanyosha and Buzigo at 26, but diplomats and aid officials said the casualty figure was probably higher.

Relief officials said aid workers would attempt to administer early Saturday to the displaced people from the hills neighbouring Bujumbura that were camped at the statue in the eastern part of the capital.

The figure of 8,500 is the one now accepted (by aid workers) as the number of displaced camped at the monument," said one relief official who declined to be named.

"He agreed to these things before. We'll see," a White House official said privately.

The latest violence has taken place in the absence of the country's Hutu President Sylvestre Niyantunganya who is in France on a private visit, officials said.

Burundi has been unstable since renegade soldiers murdered the country's first elected President Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, in 1993. More than 100,000 people are estimated to have died in ethnic violence since his killing.

## U.N., Rwanda fail to agree on peacekeepers

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council and Rwanda Friday failed to agree on the future of U.N. troops in the central African country and postponed a decision for four days on the force's size and composition.

In a resolution adopted at a formal meeting, the Council extended the life of the 2,100-strong U.N. Assistance Mission for Rwanda, known as UNAMIR, until Tuesday while it continued negotiations with the Kigali government.

The resolution was necessary because the mandate for UNAMIR expired Friday and Rwanda's per-

mission is necessary for troops to remain in the country.

Rwanda originally wanted the troops cut to 800 and the mandate renewed for three months, as a prelude to a total withdrawal. But it later agreed to a figure of 1,200, provided it consisted exclusively of logistical, communications and engineering personnel.

There are currently about 1,800 troops in UNAMIR as well as 285 military observers and other staff.

Council members, on the advice of U.N. peacekeeping experts, have insisted on a force of at least 1,400, saying this was the minimum needed to help induce

the return of more than 1.5 million Rwandan refugees who fled during and after ethnic massacres last year that killed up to a million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Negotiations between Rwandan U.N. Ambassador Manzi Bakuramutsa, himself a Council member, and a group of Council diplomats have been dragging on for days. Envoy said the negotiations were complicated by divisions within the Rwandan government on the future of the U.N. force.

Rwanda also wanted UNAMIR to leave its office equipment and some transport vehicles behind but the

Council said U.N. regulations would have to be checked first.

Instead a draft resolution the Council hopes will be adopted Tuesday asks Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to investigate the feasibility of transferring some non-lethal equipment to Rwanda.

The Tutsi-led government in Rwanda, which ousted the previous Hutu-dominated regime, resents the presence of U.N. forces and blames them for failing to stop the genocide during which the peacekeepers were reduced to a bare minimum.

## Kidnapped British embassy official freed in Colombia

BOGOTA (R) — A British embassy official kidnapped by leftist guerrillas in Colombia last August was freed by an elite police unit Friday during a raid on a rebel hideout southwest of the capital.

The successful operation ended a 119-day ordeal for Staff Sergeant Timothy Cowley, an aide to the embassy's military attaché, who was abducted on Aug. 12 while on a bird-watching

expedition in the central department of Tolima.

In a Reuters interview, Sgt. Cowley, 32, said he carried on bird-watching as often as possible during his captivity and felt "very well" despite having been blindfolded, bound hand and foot, and tied to a tree with a rope around his neck much of the time.

He was rescued early Friday in a rural area about 200 kilometres southwest of the capital.

The FARC, Colombia's largest and oldest guerrilla group, specialises in kid-

napping and protecting rural drug operations.

"I've got a few problems with my feet, but basically I'm fairly fit," Sgt. Cowley told RTV. Heavily bearded and still wearing the red bandana rebels used to blindfold him, he said the first two weeks of captivity were the most difficult.

More than 60 foreigners have been kidnapped in the country over the last three years.

## Seoul to indict former President Chun for bribery and mutiny

SEOUL (R) — The South Korean prosecutors' office said Saturday it would soon formally indict former President Chun Doo Hwan on separate charges of accepting bribes and mutiny, Yonhap News Agency said.

"We are going to indict Mr. Chun on bribery charges around Dec. 22. This will be around the same time he is expected to be indicted on separate charges of military rebellion," Choi Hang, a prosecution official, was quoted as saying.

Prosecutors were not available to confirm the report.

Mr. Chun, who ruled South Korea with an iron fist from 1980-88, now looks set to join his successor Rob Tae-Woo. Mr. Roh was formally indicted

Tuesday on charges of taking \$369 million from business groups during his 1988-93 term.

Mr. Chun was arrested last Sunday on charges of military rebellion stemming from a 1979 coup that led to the massacre of civilians at Kwangju the following May.

Yonhap said prosecutors had begun calling in up to 30 heads of the nation's largest conglomerates to ask whether they gave money to Mr. Chun.

Seven chaebol chiefs were indicted along with Mr. Roh last Tuesday for bribery, but prosecutors decided not to detain the businessman, citing the need to protect the economy. Mr. Roh and the seven corporate heads go on trial on Dec. 18.

Separately, Yonhap and state television said prosecutors investigating kickbacks to Mr. Roh questioned former air force chief Chung Yong-Hu over a multi-billion dollar U.S. warplane deal.

Prosecutors have been examining a decision made during Mr. Roh's term to buy 120 F-16s from General Dynamics in 1991, reversing a plan to buy F-18s from McDonnell Douglas.

The Seoul District Criminal Court said Friday an order had been issued freezing Mr. Roh's property rights and bank accounts unearthed by prosecutors. Mr. Roh tearfully confessed to amassing a \$654 million slush fund while in office.

Meanwhile, state television showed Mr. Chung, who headed the air force when the decision to buy the F-16s was made, entering the Seoul district prosecutors' office.

Yonhap and the television later said he was questioned

over the decision to buy F-16s from General Dynamics but no details were available. The warplane purchase was a key part of an \$18.2 billion military build-up conducted under Mr. Roh.

General Dynamics was mostly acquired in 1992 by Lockheed Corp. which merged with Martin Marietta this year to form Lockheed Martin. Kim Yong-Ho, vice president for the Seoul office of Lockheed Martin, has denied any wrongdoing.

Also on Saturday, ex-President Choi Kyu-Hah refused to answer a prosecution request to appear for questioning over the coup and massacre of an officially estimated 192 civilians in Kwangju. Residents say thousands of people died when paratroopers were sent in to put down a popular uprising.

"As a former president, Mr. Choi feels he should not have to be summoned," Lee Ki-Chang, Mr. Choi's lawyer, was quoted by Yonhap as saying.

Prosecutors want to ask Mr. Choi, caretaker head of state at the time of the coup, to appear as a witness to shed light on both incidents.

## CIA: Soviets fooled U.S. on strength

WASHINGTON (R) — The Soviet Union fed misinformation to Washington that fooled the United States into overestimating Soviet military strength, CIA Director John Deutch said in a report.

"I believe the net effect of the Soviet/Russian 'directed information' effort was that we overestimated their capability," Mr. Deutch said in a report to Congress on the damage caused by CIA spy Aldrich Ames' work for the Soviet Union.

"The overall effect was to sustain our view of the USSR as a credible military and technological opponent" when the Soviet Union was in fact on the verge of collapse, he said.

"The main thrust of this morning's conversation was the Angolan peace process," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry, calling the process "brittle because of some of the ceasefire violations."

During a meeting here with Mr. Clinton, Mr. Dos Santos made some concessions that the White House bad been demanding.

He agreed to withdraw from some contested areas, to terminate a contract with a controversial military firm, to release prisoners of war and restrict paramilitary police to their barracks, the White House said in a statement late Friday.

"He's agreed to these things before. We'll see," a White House official said privately.

The two sides have traded charges of ceasefire violations, sparking concern about the country's commitment to the peace accord.

"The peace process seems to have snagged," a second White House official said. "There has not been a great deal of progress and that's an understatement."

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, also said: "We have been very unhappy with the human rights record both of UNITA and the government."

Mr. Dos Santos acknowledged in an address here to the centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Friday that there had been "isolated violations of the ceasefire."

He pledged to work to restore peace to Soyo, an oil-rich area in northern Angola, where some of the worst ceasefire violations had been noted.

"It is not easy to restore total confidence after 20 years of war," he said, adding that he considered the peace process "irreversible."

The gunman was among those killed in the melee, police said. Four other people were injured by gunshots, three of them critically.

Police Commissioner

and is now serving a life prison term.

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Arlen Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican, said in releasing the report that the tainted CIA reports resulted in misguided decisions including the speed-up of a \$200 million U.S. defence programme.

Mr. Deutch cited no such concrete examples in his report but said the tainted reports could have influenced the speed of developing weapons to meet anticipated threats and could have shaped U.S. contractors' and military experts' thinking on the Soviet threat.

But Mr. Deutch said a damage assessment team found that Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports using information from Soviet-controlled sources and passed on to U.S. officials "bad a substantial role in framing the (U.S.) debate."

The misinformation was fed to the United States during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Ames, a veteran CIA agent who worked in counter-intelligence, was arrested in February 1994

Clinton widens lead over Dole — poll

NEW YORK (R) — President Bill Clinton widened his lead over Senate majority leader Bob Dole in a new poll released Friday, with 50 per cent supporting the incumbent against 32 per cent for the Republican challenger.

In more good news for Mr. Clinton, the Time magazine/CNN poll also showed that most respondents blamed congressional Republicans for the current budget impasse. But it revealed that 55 per cent of voters were against Mr. Clinton's decision to send troops to Bosnia.

The poll, conducted by telephone on Dec. 6-7, asked 1,000 Americans who would get their vote if the 1996 presidential election were held today.

Forty-five per cent said they would back Mr. Clinton against 32 per cent for Sen. Dole, the Republican frontrunner.

Forty-seven per cent of respondents felt the mission would succeed.

Republicans had gone too far with their budget cutting proposals, and 51 per cent said Mr. Clinton had acted more responsibly than the Republican leadership, which saw only 32 per cent support.

Overall, 51 per cent of respondents backed Mr. Clinton's budget proposal against 34 per cent for the Republican version.

On Bosnia, however, the poll showed that sentiment was running against Mr. Clinton's decision to send 20,000 troops by 51 per cent to 38 per cent.

Some 60 per cent of respondents felt the new 60,000-member NATO peacekeeping force, of which the U.S. troops will be a part, would fail to establish a "long-term lasting peace in Bosnia," only 27 per cent believed the mission would succeed.

## 8 die as man takes over New York store

William Bratton said the man was found inside the clothing store with a gun by his side. Seven other bodies were found nearby. They appeared to have died from smoke inhalation, Mr. Bratton said.

People were trapped in the shop when its automatic iron gates slammed down after the fire started, officials said.

Police said the suspect ran

# Opinion & Analysis

## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
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## Culture outlives fear

DESPITE THE government's contention that the major motivation behind its drive to amend the Press and Publications Law is the mushrooming of a sensational, irresponsible and unprofessional press, it will be difficult for the government to deny that politics played no small role in fuelling its annoyance with the media or that the whole issue is in fact political.

In contrast to the pre-1989 era when the government came under virtually no scrutiny from the press, the media is now trying to be more assertive of its role and, in the process, forcing a degree, albeit limited, of transparency on the executive authority, which has traditionally ruled unchallenged by the press or any other institution in the country.

The excesses of some tabloids have pushed the government into a justifiable degree of anger; the increased power of the press has, naturally, made the executive nervous. And that is in no way surprising. A healthy government-press relationship is one that is adversarial due to the nature of the roles that both estates of power play. The government cherishes secrecy in handling its affairs; the role of the press is to fulfil the public's right to know of what goes on in the upper echelons of power. Differences are thus inevitable.

The most important aspect about the current controversy over the performance of the press in the country is that a vigorous debate about the role of the press and the rights, and limits, to free speech has started. But that debate must be fully utilised to the benefit of the country and its democratic institutions. It must not be suffocated by the government's impatience with some violations and intolerance of the encroachment of the press on areas which have traditionally been the exclusive domain of the executive.

In an embryonic democracy like ours, the stronger trend is to balance the freedom of speech with responsibility. The government seems to believe that more regulations are the way to achieve this goal. But more restrictions are not the right path to ensuring a responsible and equally free press. More restrictions can only tie the hands of the media in a political, and social, culture that already gives free speech a back seat to other areas of concern such as religion, privacy, national unity, among others.

The press should be allowed to develop its own institutions which can check the excesses of some irresponsible publications. Professional debate among journalists, media "infrastructures" such as news councils, ombudsmen and other journalistic institutions should be encouraged so that the media itself can develop its own means of ensuring a freedom of speech that is balanced by concern for the particularities of our society.

Previous debates about the role of the media have produced the proposal to establish a media council, formed by media experts and representatives of journalistic institutions, to help guide the work of the press in the Kingdom. Instead of resorting to the easy, yet extremely costly, way of putting more restrictions on the media, the government can take the initiative of engaging the journalistic community in a debate that would lead to the creation of such council to the long term benefit of the country and the cause of democracy.

More restrictions can curb the media through fear. On the other hand, efforts to develop media institutions would create a journalistic culture suitable to the needs of society. In sum, though, cultural values produce better results, and endure much longer than practices instilled by fear.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

**AL RA'** Arabic daily Saturday described as positive the Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres's decision to release 1,000 Palestinian detainees from Israeli jails. On the eve of his visit to the United States, where he hopes to win support for his ongoing endeavours for peace with Syria, Mr. Peres was keen to announce this decision in order to create an opportune climate for his talks with the U.S. leaders, and was careful to consult with His Majesty King Hussein, President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in order to acquire further backing for the peace process, said the daily. Mr. Peres's ruling Labour Party is of course concerned with winning the 1996 parliamentary elections; and through achieving peace on all fronts, it hopes to win the favour of the Israeli electorate to achieve that goal, added the daily.

A writer in **Al Dustour** said Saturday that the JD 10 salary raise promised by the government to its civil servants by the middle of 1996 will be too little, and can by no means tidy the employees over their present predicament of trying to make ends meet. When Minister of Finance Basel Jardaneh announced that government employees will receive a JD 10 as a cost of living monthly allowance, he knew that this amount will not help this limited-income group cope with the ever rising prices of basic commodities, but he is not in a position to offer more, nor is he able to bring about a change in the present public administration system which is flabby and incompetent, said Abdullah Al Khatib. The writer said the JD 10 cost of living allowance will not achieve magic for the government employees who more or less feel they can do nothing about the situation except if they resort to stealing, taking bribes or abusing their authority. Having accepted their secure jobs, these employees, said the writer, cannot aspire to receive salaries equal to those paid to their colleagues in the private sector, but they are assured of their secure jobs until their retirement no matter how incompetent they might be.

## Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

## Jordan's stock exchange takes a beating

PRICES OF shares in the stock exchange are supposed to be a thermometer to measure the temperature of the economy, but it seems that this is not the case in Jordan. Amman stock exchange has a life of its own, along with the capacity to rise or fall irrespective of the rate of growth of the economy or the crucial changes in the laws of taxes or regulations of foreign and local investments. However, it would be too much to claim that share prices in Amman Financial Market (AFM) fluctuate at no good reasons.

Therefore, it is only normal for many observers to wonder why the price index in AFM made a nosedive at mid-1993, which continued unabated until this day, causing the index to reflect a net decline to a full 16 percentage points in the last two years or so. Are there real reasons behind this bearish trend, and consequently should the government respond to requests for rescue and to the S.O.S. signals of the speculators, and try to intervene to halt the decline and bail out the losers.

The price index of shares, issued by the management of AFM stood at 148.7 at the close of business in the last working day of November 1995 (end of 1991 = 100). This means that in spite of the substantial decline which took place during the past 25 months, yet the net change of prices during the last four years remains positive at 48.7 per cent, a compound annual growth rate of 10.4 per cent. This confirms that investment in Jordanian shares is still profitable at the medium and long-terms, but short-term fluctuations of prices are of course unavoidable in any free market.

In other words Jordanian shares are definitely feasible for the long-term investor. However, the speculator who buys today to sell tomorrow has no guarantee to make a killing each time. It is possible to make easy gains, as happened in 1991, 1992 and 1993, but it is equally possible to make a capital loss as happened in 1994 and 1995. Investors in shares will make money if they wait, while

speculators play a zero-sum game, whereby one speculator's profit is another's loss.

Any intervention by the government, whether direct or indirect, is not justified, and should not be even contemplated. The result of intervention would be shifting the losses from speculators to the Treasury, and subsidising traders of shares from the public funds. Government intervention leads to the opposite results. It hurts the very idea of a free market based on the interaction between supply and demand. It also sets a very bad precedent.

But why, in the first place, did the share prices drop during the past two years? One can think of many political and economic factors with varying degrees in raising the level of uncertainty. Among those factors are: The troubles and obstacles on the both Syrian and Palestinian peace tracks, the possible consequences of joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the partnership with the European Union (EU), both calling for lowering customs protection and the profitability of industrial companies, the future of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship and the talk about confederation, the admission of an Iraqi defector and the flirtation with the Iraqi opposition which puts the vital economic relations with Iraq at risk, lack of overall security in the whole region as demonstrated by the assassination of Mr. Rabin, the huge explosion of Riyad and the violence in Egypt, the controversy of Jordanian temporary and permanent passports, the withdrawal of liquidity from the markets due to tight monetary policy applied by the Central Bank of Jordan, the extensive activity in the primary market, higher interest rates on the Jordan dinar, the probability of issuing a law to protect foreign intellectual property rights, the cooling of relations with several Arab countries, and the flip-flop of the government's general policy which produces even more uncertainty.



## Sri Lanka faces long war despite fall of rebel base

By Rohan Gunasekera  
Reuter

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka faces a long war against Tamil Tiger guerrillas despite the army's advance into the centre of the rebel's northern Jaffna stronghold, defence analysts said.

"The war has just begun for us," a senior military officer told Reuters. "The fall of Jaffna will not mean the end of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam)."

The Tigers still control part of the Jaffna peninsula and much of the northern mainland, maintaining a sizeable fighting force despite the loss of some 1,400 fighters in the military offensive to capture Jaffna town, he said.

"We'll have to do many more operations before the tigers are sufficiently weakened," he added.

The military strategy is centred on forcing a weakened rebel force into resuming peace talks to end their 12-year war for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east. More

than 50,000 people have died in the war so far.

Elite army commandos and airborne troops penetrated into the heart of Jaffna on Saturday morning to centre after six and a half weeks of fierce fighting through a maze of mines and booby-traps.

More than 400 soldiers were killed in the fighting, which displaced an estimated 250,000 Tamils, many of whom poured across the Jaffna Lagoon into refugee camps in the northern mainland.

There, the Tigers have set up alternate command posts and bases to wage a prolonged jungle war, the analysts believe.

The offensive, the biggest in the war, has revived sagging Sinhalese morale, they add. The majority of tropical Sri Lanka are Sinhalese.

"It also demolished the image of invincibility acquired by the Tigers after a series of battlefield successes against the badly stretched and ill-equipped armed forces," an analyst told Reuters.

"But the question is whether the military can sustain this offensive," he

added.

"Also, will they have the manpower and the resources for future operations against the LTTE while holding Jaffna?"

The Tigers in recent months have badly weakened the air and sea supply lines on which the army depends to fight in the north, the rebels having cut all land routes.

The air force has hired private transport planes flown by Kazakh pilots to maintain an air bridge to Jaffna after losing over half its cargo aircraft to rebel fire and in accidents.

Rebel Sea Tiger naval wing fighters shot down a Chinese-made Y-8 transport, the biggest type in the fleet, off Jaffna while another transport, a Soviet-made AN-32, crashed into the sea in the same area last month.

The Sea Tigers have emerged as a formidable threat to the island's tiny navy, sinking two Shanghai-class gunboats, two Dvora fast attack craft and two transport vessels since April, when the rebels broke off a truce and resumed fighting.

The military has also begun an arms buildup, buying patrol boats, transport and attack aircraft, armour and artillery.

To buy them, 1996's defence spending has been raised to 38 billion rupees (\$717 million) from 32 billion rupees (\$604 million) this year.

"The sea Tigers have been ominously quiet," said the senior military officer.

"We don't know why."

The destruction of Sea Tiger bases off the Jaffna coast were high on the military's priorities, officials said.

The military is also bracing for rebel counter-attacks in the east and in Colombo to avenge their losses in Jaffna.

Isolated army garrisons in the east, from where thousands of troops were pulled out for the Jaffna offensive, were thought to be particularly vulnerable, they added.

The military has gone on a massive recruitment drive to boost its army of more than 100,000 to face an estimated 12,000 guerrillas in the north and the east.

The military has also begun an arms buildup, buying patrol boats, transport and attack aircraft, armour and artillery.

To buy them, 1996's defence spending has been raised to 38 billion rupees (\$717 million) from 32 billion rupees (\$604 million) this year.

## From sweet success in Ireland to Bosnia sourness in Germany

By Maureen Dowd

BAUMHOLDER, Germany — In the land of Joyce and Yeats, of terrible beauty and widening gynes, you don't hear much psychobabble. So the Irish cocked a brow when President Bill Clinton called their bloody tribal war a diversity issue and advised the South, since it has "more emotional and physical space," to do some outreach with the North. (Less IRA, more interface, less terrorism, more closure.)

But that was, excuse me, the expression, small potatoes.

Mr. Clinton had cuffed John Major, and in return the Irish gave him the two best days of his presidency, cooing over Himself like a doting granny.

At home he is depicted in "Saturday Night Live" skits as gluttonous and insecure.

In Ireland he was Jack Kennedy and the World Cup

rolled into one. It was the presidency that he had dreamed of but never experienced.

"Bosnia, Palestine and now Northern Ireland have yielded to his magic touch," raved the front page of The Irish Times. "Is there no stopping this guy?"

There was none of the sarcasm of the London press, like The Daily Telegraph headline describing the president's meeting with the bewigged, costumed officials at Westminster, "Cherub-faced hick makes peace with the men in tights."

In Ireland, the prodigal son of the Cassidy clan was celebrated as a statesman, a saint, an angel of peace, a ruddy handsome devil "with a bottomless bucket of charm," the most powerful man on earth and "King Billy."

From Derry to Dublin,

looking out at the ripple of American flags and hearing chants of "We Want Bill."

Mr. Clinton got that look of flushed, political ecstasy that suffuses him around big, adoring crowds. (You may not remember it, my fellow Americans, it's been so long.)

"In Ireland, Mr. Clinton discovered the joys of being a foreign policy president. In Germany, where his motorcade passed people holding signs that read 'Draft Dodger Go Home' and 'The President Who Stole Christmas,' he got a taste of the perils.

An American president had never gone to Northern Ireland, and in the lovely walled square of Derry the audience was enthralled as the president helicopter to "Daffy Boy." A priest grabbed several women to dance a jig, and parents hoisted freckled-faced children on their shoulders to see, as Seamus Heaney said, hope rhyme with history.

"My own children have

grown up in the Troubles and now I have grandchildren and I hope they will not grow up with the Troubles on the street and the violence and the worry and the fear," said Marian

McGeehan, 42, who works at a community playground. "We want to get on with our lives."

But as the Emerald Isle disappeared in a gray mist, like Brigadoon, the president found himself facing a crowd more resentful than grateful. At Smith Army Barracks in Germany, he talked to young soldiers who will go to Bosnia, and to their families. As he explained why America must

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1995

## Stop the price hikes

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

LAST SUNDAY, the Arabic daily Al Dustour carried three news items that were related to the prices of food stuffs.

Strikingly they all involved two parties: one was the government represented by the Ministry of Supply and the other, the suppliers.

A memo of the demand side of the market was suspiciously absent from all three articles.

In the first article, chicken farmers complained about low market prices and said that they were forced to sell at below the price set by the Ministry of Supply.

Their claim was that Jordan was importing large quantities of frozen chicken thereby causing chicken prices to fall because of excess supply.

They called on the Ministry of Supply to ban imports of frozen chicken.

The Ministry of Supply countered by asserting that there were no imports of frozen chicken due to the 50 per cent custom duty imposed on this item last year.

The ministry further asserted that local production (8,300 tonnes of chicken) last month, which exceeded the domestic quantity demanded by 500 tonnes, was the culprit which caused the price of chicken to fall.

In the same article the Ministry of Supply explained that the farmers were selling at below the price ceiling (the maximum price at which they can legally sell) and not the price set by the ministry.

In other words, the farmers mistook the price-ceiling for a market price.

The chicken farmers were complaining because they couldn't sell at the maximum price set by the ministry.

That is so sad.

The farmers did not complain about the price of eggs. Why? Because recently the price of eggs has risen significantly and egg producers are making notable windfalls.

The article further elaborated that egg producers sustained great losses last year which caused some to bankrupt while others diverted their resources to the chicken business because the latter commanded high prices.

The military is also bracing for rebel counter-attacks in the east and in Colombo to avenge their losses in Jaffna.

Isolated army garrisons in the east, from where thousands of troops were pulled out for the Jaffna offensive, were thought to be particularly vulnerable, they added.

Causing a shortage in the market. As the shortage took place the price of eggs rose.

This is the market mechanism. However, the consumer went unheard.

Why? Because the consumers are not organised into blocks like the producers.

They cannot fight the cartel formed by the large chicken producers.

The second news item reported that the Ministry of Supply has been bombarded by a group of importers who are asking the ministry to float prices of meat, cheese, and tea.

By Robert Fisk

CAIRO, Alaa Al Din Nazmi drove into the underground car-park of his luxury Geneva apartment at about 9 p.m. on Nov. 13. Married with a four-month-old daughter, the commercial counsellor to the Egyptian embassy should have had no reason to fear assassination. Officials from the U.N.'s European headquarters also lived in the apartment block and — officially, at least — Nazmi spent much of his time negotiating the future of Egypt's basket-case economy with members of the World Trade Organisation.

But no sooner had he parked his car and begun walking across the garage to take the lift to his seventh-floor flat than a gunman — or gunmen — opened fire. Nazmi was hit by six bullets and died instantly, although his body was not discovered for another two hours.

In Cairo, however, political sources suggested that Nazmi was working under diplomatic cover and that his real job was to track down members of Egyptian Islamist armed groups in Europe who have sworn to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak's regime. Nazmi's murderers said as much two days later. Describing themselves as the Gamaa Al Adala Al Alamiya — the "International Justice Group" — they claimed that his real job was to hunt Muslim "activists" on behalf of the Egyptian government.

The Egyptian authorities insist Nazmi was no more than a diplomat. But his murder came less than two months after Talaat Qassem, the co-founder of Egypt's Gamaa Islamiya — the "Islamic Group" largely responsible for the anti-Mubarak insurrection that has cost almost 900 lives in Egypt over the past three years — disappeared on a visit to the Croatian capital to Zagreb. Mr. Qassem held refugee status in Denmark and his family said that he was visiting former

Yugoslavia to research a book. But other sources claimed he was on the way to visit Islamist fighters in Bosnia.

Whatever the purpose of his trip, the Croatian authorities said they arrested the 38-year-old Egyptian on Sept. 12, fined him for violating residence laws and expelled him from the country six days later.

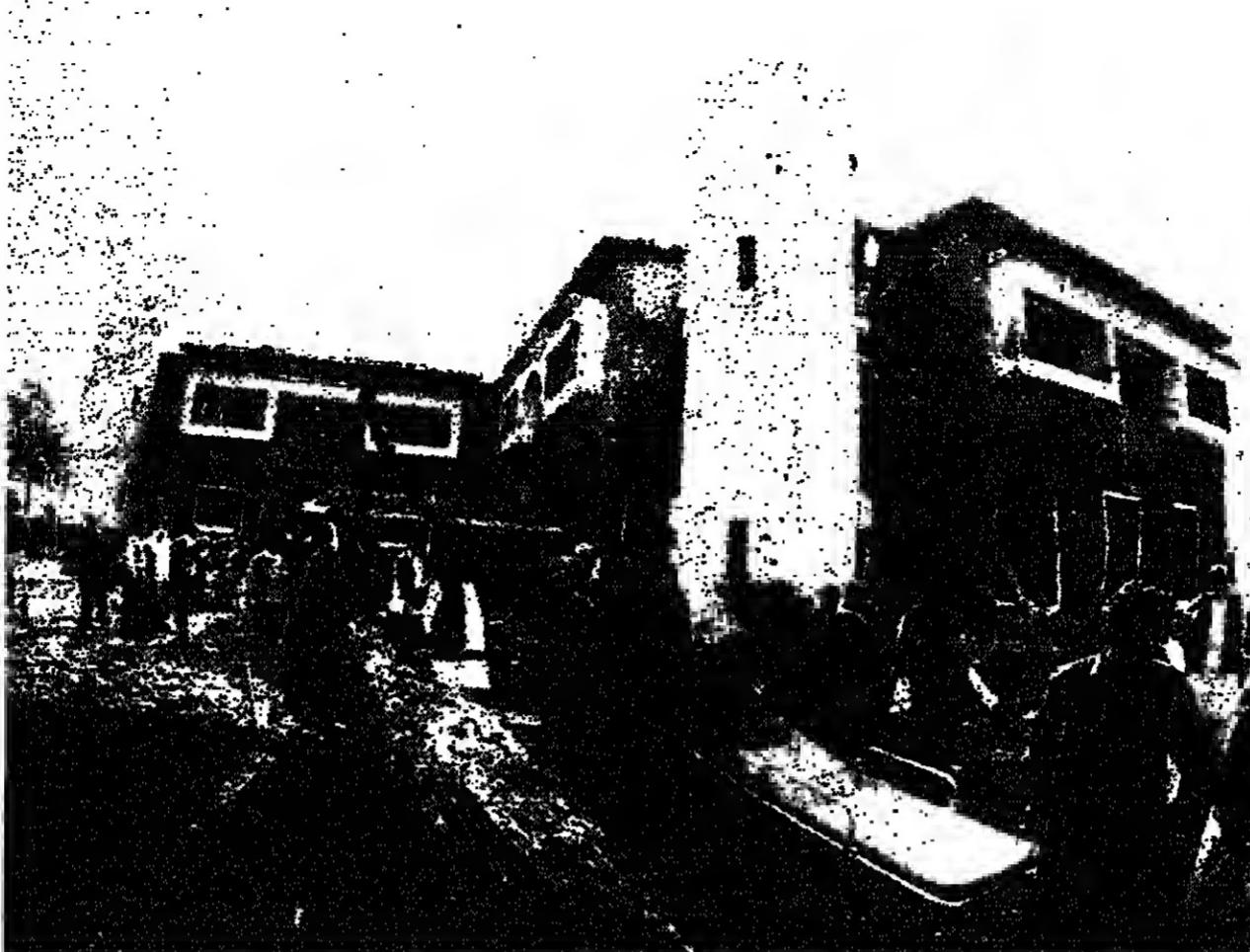
Muslim activists sympathetic to the Gamaa, however, told a different story. They said Mr. Qassem was seized by a group of American intelligence officers, interrogated and later sent to Egypt via the Croatian port of Rijeka, and is now being held in the Al Mansoura Egyptian intelligence headquarters. Both the United States and the Croatians flatly denied the story. But two weeks later, a massive car bomb blew up in Rijeka, killing a Croatian policeman. It followed a threat from an organisation calling itself "Vanguards of Conquest" which had warned the Croats not send Mr. Qassem back to Egypt.

By mid-November, therefore, the Egyptian regime was at war with its enemies overseas. President Mubarak, outraged at the continuation of the armed Muslim insurrection in Upper Egypt, decided to send large numbers of his own intelligence officers abroad to hunt down what he called the "Arab Afghans," the Arab volunteers who had fought against the Soviet Union with CIA backing to Afghanistan but once the war was over had turned against the regimes of Egypt and Algeria in the hope of creating Islamic republics.

Up to 100 Egyptian state security police were dispatched to London to set up a base for "anti-terrorist" operations in Europe. Around 40 of the men were

## Cairo's dirty war spills across Europe

**Egyptian hit-squads: Islamists strike back as long arm of Mubarak's vengeance reaches out to London**



A crater outside the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad. Some of the 18 dead may have been secret agents

stated by a reliable military source in Cairo to be armed; all of them were said to be tasked to eliminate the "terrorists" who had declared war on Egypt. Mr. Mubarak also sanctioned the dispatch of another 100 men to Pakistan to pursue Egyptian militants in Baluchistan and other areas bordering Afghanistan.

One Cairo source says that Hassan Al Alfie, the

Egyptian Interior Minister, was behind the entire project, having told the president during the summer that if three named "Arab Afghans" were liquidated, the "terrorist war" against Egypt would be over. The three men were named as Mr. Qassem, an activist called Iman Al Zawahri, whom the Egyptians believed to be living in Switzerland, and Moham-

mad Al Islambouly, reportedly to be in Pakistan, the brother of Lieutenant Khaled Al Islambouly, the army officer who murdered President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

By late September, Mr. Qassem had disappeared in Croatia. The Swiss denied all knowledge of Mr. Zawahri but the Egyptian government's first diplomat casualty had been shot

down in Switzerland in mid-November. Then, on Nov. 19, a suicide bomber attacked the Egyptian embassy in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, killing 18 men, including five diplomats. Once again, sources in Cairo said that several of the dead embassy officials were working under cover as diplomats to help the Pakistani authorities track down members of the

Gamaa and other anti-government groups, especially Mohammad Al Islambouly; indeed, the same sources claimed that these same men had already secured the extradition of nine wanted Egyptian militants to Cairo. Mr. Mubarak was on the point of sending the next batch of 100 intelligence officers to Islamabad on a parallel operation to the one he had sanctioned for London when the Islamabad bomb went off. The operation was cancelled at 24 hours' notice.

Two days after the bombing, however, the Adela Al Alamiya group — which had admitted the murder of Alaa Al Din Nazmi in Geneva — claimed responsibility for the Islamabad slaughter, and added a ferocious new warning. "There are other death sentences that have been issued against other (diplomats) and these sentences will be implemented even if they hang from the curtains of the Kaaba," the group said in a faxed acknowledgement of responsibility.

"There is no punishment for you other than cutting your bodies into shreds. You are more criminal than the Zionists."

The claim also demanded the freeing of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, one of Mr. Mubarak's fiercest enemies among Islamic prelates, currently jailed in the United States, and the release of Talaat Qassem from his supposed prison in Egypt.

Egypt's tit-for-tat war with its enemies abroad now seems set to produce further bloodshed. And just as Egypt's ruthless intelligence services are hunting for the regime's enemies abroad, President Mubarak has instituted an ever more draconian repression at home. Quite apart from the sentencing of 54 non-violent members of the

Muslim Brotherhood before the parliamentary elections — in which several of the convicted men were candidates — and the death of 26 Islamists in Egyptian prisons since January, it has now emerged that his intelligence services took action against Cairo University students who protested at his decision to attend the Jerusalem funeral of Yitzhak Rabin on November 5.

Sources close to the Egyptian security forces say that at least 50 students, most of whom were demonstrating against the regime rather than the Jerusalem visit, were arrested by plainclothes policemen posing as university officials. After they had been forced to give their addresses, police raided their homes and took their entire families, including women with babies, to the Central Security Camp on the Cairo-Alexandria road, where many were kept without food and water for two days. Some policemen brought bread and water to the elderly — but only for pay.

Even less publicised were the bloody raids by security force personnel on two villages, Maghaga in Minya province and another hamlet near the Fayoum oasis, just a month ago.

About 1,500 police were reported to have stormed Maghaga, apparently looking for Islamic "terrorists." They killed 13 men, including, they said, a local Muslim militant leader. In Fayoum, seven people were killed, including the local head of the Gamaa Al Alamiya. "This was not just a military operation," a source familiar with the raids said in Cairo this week. "The security forces were asked to be policemen, judges and executioners."

If that, European governments may now ask, what the Egyptian government has ordered its intelligence men abroad to be?

*The Independent*

## Peres seeks 'new ideas'

(Continued from page 1).

is meeting with President Clinton he was going to raise some ideas on how to get the stalled Israeli-Syrian peace talks restarted.

"The character of the negotiations has to be flexible and wide ranging. I would stick to one channel, but, either, use different and various channels according to need," Mr. Peres said.

Mr. Peres did not elaborate, but Yigal Meron, head of the influential parliament foreign affairs and defence committee, proposed a summit meeting between the leaders of Israel, Syria and the United States to be held to work out a peace treaty.

Mr. Meron told Israel radio that the U.S. shuttle efforts were not productive and only a summit would progress peace efforts.

The United States has mediated between Israel and Syria with special U.S. envoy Dennis Ross visiting the region last week. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is to start a Middle East shuttle in mid-December.

"The main message I got from Damascus is that their doors are open to what we have to say, to new ideas and new approaches," Mr. Peres said.

Syria meanwhile criticised Mr. Peres over his insistence on having early warning stations on the Golan Heights, saying it would undermine his credibility.

"Peres' statements indicating that Israel remains committed to the idea of early warning stations do not give us optimism," the official Al Thawra daily wrote.

"They will hamper all peace efforts as well as the coming talks in Washington."

**Jordan orders out Iranian**

(Continued from page 1)

Arabs and Palestinians to wreck the process.

According to sources, the expulsion of Mr. Batni came after he paid an unannounced visit to the southern tourist attraction of Petra, which is frequented by Israeli tourists.

The sources said the Iranian diplomat, a fluent Arabic speaker, "disguised" his movements by using a taxi and made inquiries in Petra about the movements of Israeli tourists coming to the ancient ruins there and talked to local residents.

"He told the residents that as Moslems they had a duty to fight Jews and asked them why they tolerate Israeli visitors to Petra who are also

## Shbeihat arrested, faces trial

(Continued from page 1) police made the arrest and the inspection."

"Mr. Shbeihat is a public figure," said Hamzeh Mansour, spokesperson of the Islamic Action Front bloc in Parliament. "The manner in which he was arrested should correspond with his status. But, having security officers at his home and his office" is inappropriate.

Syria, which wants an air surveillance system instead, has refused the demand.

"The U.S. is asked to get an Israeli commitment to the American peace initiative which is land for peace," the Syrian newspaper said.

"Peace as and still is Syria's strategic option," it concluded.

The last round of negotiations, in June in Washington, founded on the issue of early warning stations.

Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, who as army chief led the failed June talks with the head of the Syrian military, has said Israel would simply like to get the Syrians talking again.

"I don't think it matters what kind of dialogue is developed as long as it is one that is acceptable to both sides," Mr. Barak said recently.

Injecting a strident note, Israel's ambassador in Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, shot down reports that Israel was ready to change its position on ground stations perhaps in return for a U.S. military alliance with the Jewish state.

"The reports that were principally in the American press regarding a supposed Israeli willingness to be flexible or moderate its position are reports without any foundation," Mr. Rabinovich said on Friday.

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(Continued from page 1)

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"He told the residents that as Moslems they had a duty to fight Jews and asked them why they tolerate Israeli visitors to Petra who are also

the strongest institutions legally and historically," the government wants to crack down on them, he said, adding that "the government does not want these associations to be a legal entity to rally against price hikes."

"I might be taken to prison. I might be condemned, but when I am in prison the government will be in prison too," said Mr. Shbeihat, who is expected to appear before the prosecutor general today.

The professional associations have been at loggerheads with the government mainly over peace with Israel. Several associations have threatened their members with dismissal if they normalise relations with Israel. The King called twice in the past month on the "silent majority" to come out and express its support for peace. He also called on the associations to leave politics to politicians.

They fooled the people, they told them it's going to be milk and honey... but what is happening is that... the prices are rising, and the dinar is in danger," Mr. Shbeihat charged before a group of journalists, unionists and parliamentarians. "In two weeks, the price of bread is going to double and water is going to quadruple."

In reference to the government's recent criticism of the professional associations and the performance of the press, Mr. Shbeihat claimed that the government wants to "muzzle the voice of the opposition."

"There is no democracy. They cracked down on Parliament by introducing the one-person, one vote law; they cracked down on and threatened all political parties that are in the opposition camp while those who approve of their policies were offered scholarships and grants," charged Mr. Shbeihat.

"And now because the professional associations are

desecrating the place," said one source. "He implicitly urged them to attack Israelis coming to Jordan."

The driver of the taxi became suspicious of the man's comments and movements and drove him to the nearest police station (in Maan) and reported him, according to the source.

"At first the diplomat tried to hide his true identity," said the source. "Only when it became clear that police were going to detain him as suspect did he show his identity card and revealed that he was a foreign diplomat."

The Foreign Ministry was "brought into the picture" because of the man's status as an accredited diplomat. The ministry asked that the man

cy. The former deputy did not contest the Amman Third District seat in the 1993 parliamentary elections. But he came back to the scene when he won the JEA presidency in 1994.

A journalist from the Islamist weekly Al Sahel

newspaper, Yasser Abu Hileh, was detained by police for a few hours after taking pictures of Mr. Shbeihat's arrest. The journalist told the Jordan Times after his release that his detention order was issued by Prosecutor General Obiedat.

## Kabbariti begins visit to Doha

(Continued from page 1) at the Red Sea port of Aqaba for Qatari gas to be exported to Israel.

Qatar and the U.S. Enron Corporation signed an agreement on developing Qatar's Northern gas field during an international economic gathering held in Amman in October.

Israel and Enron signed a

separate accord under which the company will provide the Jewish state with Qatari gas.

The gas, in liquefied form, will be sent by tankers to the Red Sea or the Mediterranean to a transit terminal where it will be repressed and sent to Israel. Diplomats have said the terminal will possibly be constructed in Aqaba.

## Qatar threatens boycott

(Continued from page 1) to stop playing "big brother" towards its partners in the GCC and warned of a growing revolt after Qatar's walkout at the Muscat summit.

"The rulers on the southern side of the Gulf had a head-on collision in the Omani capital last week. This clash, if the rulers are wise, should be considered as an eye-opener," said the English-language Iran News.

"Diverging opinions on political issues does not justify heavy-handed policies and fait accomplis," Al Arabi said.

An Iranian newspaper meanwhile urged Saudi Ara-

bia to stop playing "big brother" towards its partners in the GCC and warned of a growing revolt after Qatar's walkout at the Muscat summit.

"The rulers on the southern side of the Gulf had a head-on collision in the Omani capital last week. This clash, if the rulers are wise, should be considered as an eye-opener," said the English-language Iran News.

"Diverging opinions on political issues does not justify heavy-handed policies and fait accomplis," Al Arabi said.

"And the Qatari rebellion is not the end of it. The Saudis may have to face similar revolts from Oman, Kuwait and the UAE. The sooner the Saudis stop their 'big brother's role,' the better."

At the city's Al Najah University, some 5,000 suppor-

## Clashes continue in Nablus

(Continued from page 1)

tors of Hamas held a memorial march to commemorate the anniversary of the beginning of the Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule in 1987.

Hamas spokesman Ibrahim Ghosheh urged the crowd to boycott the Palestinian elections.

"This is not the right way to get the Palestinian homeland back. The only solution is the jihad, the military way," Mr. Ghosheh said in a telephone linkup from his headquarters in Amman.

The army banned Israels from Tulkarm Saturday afternoon as a step to avoid attacks on Israelis during the delicate period of the handover.

Israeli troops are to pull out of four more cities — Nablus, Kalkiliya, Bethlehem and Ramallah — by the end of December, ahead of Palestinian general elections set for Jan. 20. The presence of 450 Jewish settlers in the town of Hebron has delayed its evacuation until the end of March.

Meanwhile Saturday, Nablus, the west Bank's largest city, was still tense following Friday's fatal shooting. At one point Saturday, Israeli soldiers fired into the air after a tear-gas grenade was tossed into one of their bases. There were no reports of injuries.

At the city's Al Najah University, some 5,000 suppor-

## Shadow cast over

(Continued from page 1)

part of a contingent of about 3,500 U.S. troops expected to be deployed in Hungary to provide technical support to the NATO combat forces heading into Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"The plane today brought in around 10 U.S. army and airforce public affairs officers, and some ground control approach units," Daljeet Bagga, a U.N. spokesman in Tuzla, said.

A U.S. team has already been in Tuzla, using the existing U.N. base used since 1992 by Norwegian, Swedish and Danish troops, and Saturday set up for a watching press, tactical navigation and ground control equipment needed to guide planes in on the hilly and often foggy approach to Tuzla.

## Khatib sees Jordan earning record \$723 million from tourism this year

AMMAN (R) — Jordan said Friday that revenue from tourism should hit a record \$723 million in 1995 from one million foreign tourists, representing an early dividend from the Kingdom's 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

"We expect to exceed one million tourists in 1995, and with the peace process, we hope the region including Jordan will take a bigger share of world tourism that reflects its resources and unique heritage," Tourism and Antiquities Minister Abdul Ilahi Al Khatib told Reuters.

The figures confirm that visits by both Israelis and other foreigners were sharply higher than in 1994, with total revenue from tourism jumping 24 per cent in 1995 from the \$582 million earned last year.

The private sector hopes

numbers will exceed five million arrivals a year by the year 2000, making tourism the biggest hard currency earner in Jordan's economy.

Jordan's sites include the ancient city of Petra, the Greco-Roman town of Jerash and the resort of Aqaba.

Jordan's tourist arrivals rose 26.16 per cent in the first 10 months of 1995 to 930,480 tourists the same period last year.

Arrivals from the United States and Canada saw the highest rise of 47.27 per cent, followed by European arrivals whose numbers rose 39.26 per cent compared to 1994.

Israeli tourist arrivals were 84,859 in the last 10 months compared to close to zero in 1994.

Although representing only nine per cent of total

arrivals, Israeli visitors are forecast to rise substantially once a long-delayed Jordanian-Israeli transport deal is signed this month, allowing private car and bus traffic across the borders.

"It (Israeli visits) will increase once movement becomes easier and ordinary citizens can travel by car," Mr. Khatib said.

Jordan wants to catch up with Israel, which had a record 2.17 million visitors in 1994 and \$2.75 billion revenue.

Mr. Khatib said Jordan "stands to benefit from competition with Israel by improving our performance."

Mr. Khatib said Jordan, forecasting an extra 7,500 new hotel beds to meet forecast demand, was also witnessing a boom in hotel construction,

to add 3,500 beds in two to three years.

Six five-star hotels were newly licensed in Amman alone, aside from 1,200 beds approved along the Dead Sea and several others in the ancient Nabatean capital of Petra to capitalise on Jordan's new popularity as a tourist destination.

Mr. Khatib said the government will also soon announce leasing virgin state lands for tourism development along the Red Sea coast of Aqaba, on the same auction terms offered to investors in the once out-of-bounds Dead Sea shore border area.

Four hotels with international chains have been recently approved along the Dead Sea, costing an estimated \$280 million.

## China clarifies moves towards currency convertibility

BEIJING (AFP) — China's goal of making its currency freely convertible by 2000 will be met ahead of target, but only in the current account, according to the country's economic tsar Zhu Rongji.

In a wide-ranging interview with a U.S.-based magazine that was carried by the official Xinhua news agency Saturday, Vice Premier Zhu also rejected any rapid opening of China's insurance market and played down the country's growing trade surplus with the United States.

Stressing that China's timetable of achieving free convertibility of the renminbi yuan by 2000 should not be "misunderstood," Mr. Zhu said "free convertibility (only) covers the current accounts — it doesn't mean completely free convertibility."

Exchange reforms are aimed at improving China's investment environment, liberalising trade and attracting more foreign investment in line with International Monetary Fund (IMF) accords, Mr. Zhu said.

At the same time, he defended the validity of China's existing exchange rate policies, under which state controls allow only minimum fluctuations against the dollar.

Those policies have sired a trade surplus and foreign investment that boosted China's foreign exchange re-

serves to their current level of over \$73 billion, he told the magazine, China Information.

"This will enable us to achieve an early realisation of free convertibility of the (yuan) under the current accounts."

However, Mr. Zhu added that currency reforms could only be carried out "in a safe and reliable way and exchange rates should be kept stable."

Questioned on demands for China to grant greater access to its rapidly expanding insurance market, Mr. Zhu said the government was "determined" to open the sector wider to overseas firms, but warned that the process would be carried out gradually.

He also revealed that two insurance firms — one Canadian and one Japanese — had been granted permission to open branches in China, becoming the third and fourth overseas firms to do so.

At the same time, Mr. Zhu warned that any rapid opening of the insurance market would damage the fledgling domestic sector.

On the question of China's trade surplus with the United States, Mr. Zhu said the problem would "be solved gradually" with growing demand in China providing an ever expanding market for U.S. exports, especially grain.

"The trade imbalance is

not a serious problem, and priority should be given to political ties in the effort to improve bilateral relations," Mr. Zhu said.

U.S. officials recently estimated that the U.S. trade deficit with China would hit \$38 billion this year, up from \$30 billion in 1994, and soar to \$50 billion by the end of 1996.

China, which does not count entrepot trade through Hong Kong, disputes the U.S. figures, putting its 1994 surplus at \$7.4 billion and, between January and July this year, at \$5.2 billion.

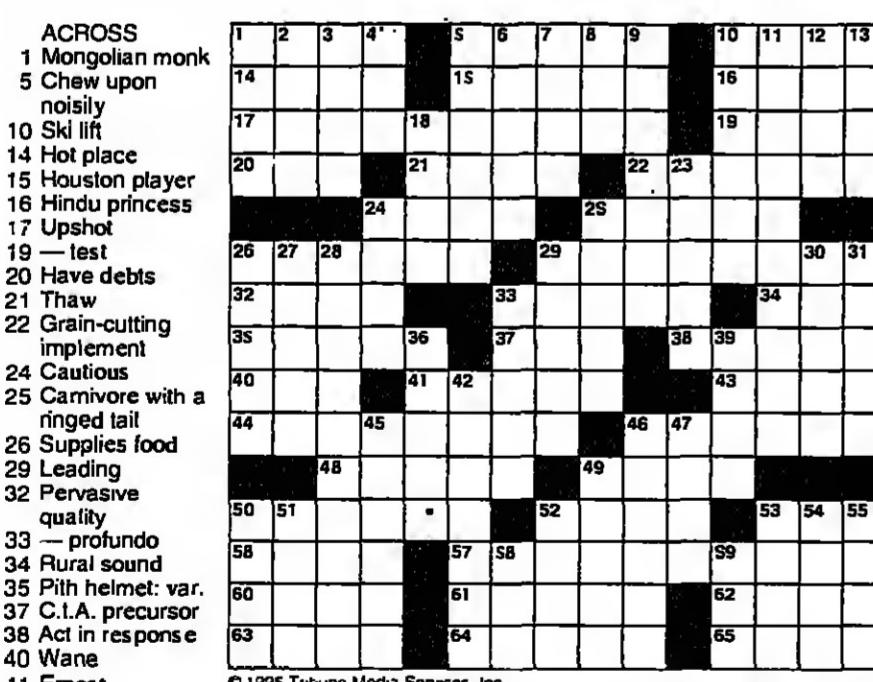
Mr. Zhu also explained that China's recent experiments with market-style economic controls did not preface an end to basic state intervention.

Tipping his hat to market mechanisms developed by capitalist countries, Mr. Zhu said "we did draw lessons from their experiences" in planning China's transition to a socialist market economy.

However, he stressed that it was "impossible for a market economy to continue normal operations without a certain degree of government intervention."

Mr. Zhu cited the example of strict controls on bank loans, which the government could not lift "lest it is forced to increase money supply, thus giving rise to higher inflation."

## THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson



Yesterday's puzzle solved:

7 Came down	8 Guys	9 Adjusts beforehand	10 Kind of bullet	11 In unbroken sequence	12 Blue dye	13 Fair attraction	18 General Bradley	23 Guaranteed to get	24 The Way We	25 Dress up	26 Sheep shelters	27 Sun-dried brick	28 Some comedians	29 Drying ovens	30 Mother-of-pearl	31 Spud	33 Drills	36 Arab chieftain	39 Lawman Wyatt Earp	42 Users	45 Sight, smell, etc.					
1 G LA O	2 G M A N	3 P A I N S	4 R A V I	5 A E I O	6 U P S E T	7 A L A S	8 I N D O	9 S P A C E	10 F A L C O N S	11 S A N D H A W K S	12 O D E A	13 R E L	14 S H A V E R	15 P E A R L I T E	16 T O I L E T	17 B A N C	18 D E A	19 A S T R O	20 S A N D O I L E R S	21 R E A	22 E L I S	23 L E A S E	24 T A R T A R I C	25 R I F L E O	26 I D A	27 S E A T
29 D	30 G	31 A	32 R	33 E	34 S	35 T	36 E	37 R	38 S	39 N	40 R	41 I	42 E	43 O	44 P	45 L	46 U	47 Y	48 Z	49 A	50 E	51 R	52 S	53 P	54 M	55 S

## Mutt'n'Jeff



## GCC states seek unified corporate law

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are trying to unify their corporate laws as part of long-standing plans to merge their economies and create a common market, an official report has said.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have drafted a standard law regulating the operation of local private institutions and they would discuss it in January, the Riyadh-based GCC secretariat said.

The report, received here, contained details of the draft corporate law covering the

financial and the legislative structure of the companies.

The law, which is subject to modification before approval, stipulated any company must build a financial reserve of at least 10 per cent of its paid-up capital to ensure there are enough funds to cover any loss.

The rule follows measures by GCC governments to consolidate the financial position of their banking sector to comply with adequacy standards set by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) for banks worldwide.

The measures include instructions for all commercial banks to raise their capital adequacy, the ratio between shareholders' equity and assets. They also involve stronger government control, periodic inspection of financial statements and incentives for merging banks.

Under the new corporate law, which must be endorsed by the GCC heads of state, local firms should prepare annual financial results and are not permitted to trade in their shares before issuing such results.

The value of new shares issued to boost the capital must not exceed their face value and all shares should not be divided into smaller units. The law also covered lending activities and the organisational structure.

The GCC groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in an economic, defence and political alliance created in May 1981. The six members signed an economic pact two years later to establish a common market.



PAPAZZI, the international restaurant chain is proud to announce the opening of its 2nd Jordanian restaurant in Wadi Mousa, to elegantly serve its gourmet Pizza, Pasta, Chicken and Salads to the visitors of the ancient city of PETRA

Petra main touristic road - 200 meters from the ruins entrance.

Jordan Times  
Tel: 684311/  
699634

JUMBLE. THAT SCRABBLE WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

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DAIDE

GRAIND

UNBREM

25 gallons-sign here

THE GLUE COMPANY CONSIDERED ITS SALES

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: CHAMP BOOTH HOURLY TEAPOT

Answer: What Mom demanded from Junior — THE HOLE TRUTH

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Go over in your mind today the policy decisions you came to with your fellow associates and handle them conscientiously.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can handle creative and artistic tasks very well today and finish them nicely. Enjoy a quiet evening with your loved ones.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Put through those arrangements you have made where social or amusement matters are concerned and everyone will be satisfied with the outcome.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have made plans with your loved ones, so don't disappoint them by turning to other activities which prove to be unproductive.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Show outside partners that you want to cooperate more and not rule the roost and will get loyal backing from them.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Get your bone spruced up today so that it is more charming and comfortable. Anything of a monetary nature can be settled nicely.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) You are highly magnetic at this time and can easily get others to go along with your ideas. See as many good friends as possible.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) Be with a trusted advisor and show gratitude for the advice given, be sure to follow suggestions given to you by a knowledgeable individual.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a fine day today for seeing as many persons as you can, improving relationships and renewing old ones with those who have returned.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Showing higher-ups respect and admiration can bring the backing you need at this time for an important project. Be charming in the evening.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Show that new acquaintance that you want to be more friendly. Make arrangements for some trip you have planned with your loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Use your intuition where romance is concerned. Use charm and tact on business allies and get your points across quickly.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

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## Jordan Inter.Continental announces \$20m expansion plan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan Inter.Continental, one of modern Amman's oldest landmarks, on Saturday announced a \$20 million expansion plan in what it described as a move to cope with the rising demand for hotel rooms along with tourism to the country.

The expansion involves an addition of 125 rooms and suites, conference halls, a health club, a shopping arcade and underground parking on a total area of 18,500 square metres. The main new complex will be

built at the parking lot next to the hotel as one drives from the Second Circle to the Third Circle.

The project is being launched amid a flurry in hotel-building in Jordan, with at least four other international groups — Hyatt, Hilton, Sheraton and Conrad — having either launched construction or announced plans to establishing five-star luxury hotels in Amman.

The announcement of the Jordan Inter.Continental project was made at a press conference by Ziad Annab, chairman of the Arab Hotels and Tourism Company which

owns the hotel, who also signed an accord on the occasion with Arabtech-Jardaneh Consulting Engineers who will act as local consultant and supervisor of construction.

The new facilities will also include a "major renovation of a major part of the existing rooms as well as the upgrading, renovation and extension of many of its other existing facilities," Mr. Annab told the press conference.

Four international companies — Britain's Wimberley Allison Tong & Goo (architect), Ove Arup and Partners (consulting en-

gineers), and Hunt Hamilton Zuch (interior designers), and Germany's Bodekar Wagenfeld and Partner (landscape architects) — are involved in the project. A split-up of the contracts was not immediately available.

Controlling interest in Jordan Inter.Continental, established in 1962 and managed by the international Inter.

Continental Hotels Group, has shifted to the private sector, which now controls about 67 per cent of the capital of the hotel after the government sold a major part of its stocks last year.

Mr. Annab said occupancy rate at the 400-room hotel was around 72 per cent, up from 45 per cent two years ago, and noted that the average room rent for a five-star hotel in Amman had gone up to nearly \$100 per night compared with \$45 two years ago.

"We are hopeful that the rates would go up gradually and would be more compatible with those in some of our neighbouring countries," said Mr. Annab referring the average \$120 per night at five-star hotels in Israel, Syria and Egypt.

The expansion of Jordan Inter.Continental was warranted, Mr. Annab said, in view of the high number of tourists visiting Jordan in the wake of the peace treaty that Jordan signed with Israel last year. He referred to figures released by the Ministry of Tourism that said nearly one million tourists came to Jordan this year, almost double the number from 1994.

Mr. Annab disagreed with some of the other hoteliers in Amman who complain that the intense focus on building new hotels in Amman was detrimental to the established

hotel in the capital since, they argue, the number of hotel rooms in Amman would reach a saturation point in two years' time.

According to Mr. Annab, the number of five-star hotel rooms in Amman would go up by 1,200 rooms in the next two or three years and this rise is very much compatible with the expected growth in tourism to Jordan.

The Arab Tourism and Hotels Company, the holding firm, recently issued 1.4 million additional stocks at a nominal value of JD 1 and a premium of JD 6, raising JD 9.3 million in net proceeds and increasing its capital of JD 5 million from JD 3.6 million.

Proceeds from the issuance will be used to finance the expansion project. The rest of the project cost will be provided by the holding firm.

## BUSINESS DAILY

A review of news from the Arabic press

### Business of begging can make a JD 3,000 income per month

★ ★ A STUDY conducted by the Ministry of Social Development on a sample of 29 women caught begging in the streets shows that their monthly collection is between JD 200 to JD 400 and that they enjoy good economic conditions. A senior ministry official, Mousa Al Safi, pointed out that there was a whole family living from begging with a monthly collection of JD 3,000. Noting that this group of people considers begging by women as normal behaviour, Mr. Safi said that these women are distributed from early morning in front of hospitals, hotels and public squares. In order to draw people's pity, these women beggars carry false medical reports, show some form of handicap or carry babies or children who in most cases are "borrowed." Mr. Safi said that this group, which lives in very good and, sometimes, deluxe houses, rejects the financial help from the ministry as their income from begging is higher.

The study showed that these people are completely illiterate and 80 per cent of them have taken begging as a profession out of tradition and not out of need.

Fawziyyeh, from an Arab country, said her husband works in a garage and does not know what she is doing. "He thinks I work as a maid," she said, adding that she had to work because of many problems with her husband. "I do not want to return to my country. My income ranges between JD 3 and JD 5 a day," she said.

Another Fawziyyeh who had been caught begging for the third time said she collects about JD 7 each day and that she was forced into begging because her husband married another woman and had left her and their children without any support.

Maha was also caught for the third time but she promised it would be the last time. "I am a mother of seven children and I also spend on my seven cousins, in addition to paying the house rent. My husband works in a neighbouring country but hasn't contacted me for some time. I collect JD 6 a day," she said, noting that she sought help from the ministry but was rejected because she was married and her husband was still alive.

Amal, caught begging for the 20th time, says she hopes it would be the last time. "My husband was an ideal man but he became sick and I had to beg to provide my family with good living and be able to bring medicine for my husband who does not know what I really work. I know he would not allow me, but I have to," she said.

Another Maha says: "I leave early, about eight in the morning, with my brother's wife. Everyone goes to a certain location. I return at around 11 a.m. Some days I collect JD 8 and on other days only JD 2."

Nimat, Kifaya and Aisha prefer entrances of hospitals and they collect between JD 3 and JD 10 each day.

Mr. Safi urged the public not to give beggars any money because that would encourage them to carry on with their behaviour. The ministry will transfer these cases to courts which sentence a beggar for repeated begging to one year in jail. Some of the beggars are released on a JD 1,000 bail but the minister had recently raised the amount to JD 3,000. Secretary-general Farouq Naghwi said the ministry cannot bring the phenomenon to an end by itself and he stressed the need for all parties to cooperate in finding a solution. He added that begging has become organised and that a beggar refuses to obtain help from the National Aid Fund because he/she can profit more from begging. "Many families living on begging own real estate and buildings," Mr. Naghwi pointed out. He demanded that stricter penalties be taken against beggars and that people stop blaming the ministry over the issue.

"The dinar is no longer enough for a beggar whose monthly income reaches JD 3,000 and the people are greatly responsible for keeping the begging phenomenon on the increase," he stressed. "How can a person not be blamed when he/she pays a beggar JD 5 for a packet of chewing gum." (Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).



An artist's vision of the expanded Inter.Continental Hotel

### Caviar production in Iran threatened by dwindling reserves

TEHRAN (AFP) — Production of Iran's world-famous caviar is becoming increasingly threatened by the diminishing stock of sturgeon fish in the Caspian Sea.

Lutfollah Saidi, the vice-

president of Iran's fishing industry, has warned that poaching through inaccurate methods "seriously threatens the stock of the different kinds of sturgeon in the Caspian."

Independent experts have also blamed excessive production for the dwindling stock of sturgeon.

According to official estimates, some 780 tonnes of caviar have been produced in Iran in the past five years, including 200 tonnes extracted in 1994 "alone." The figures do not include the vast amount of the delicacy hauled by illegal poachers.

Virtually all of the caviar produced here is exported, mainly to Europe, the United States and Arab Gulf kingdoms across the Gulf. A small amount is made available to foreign tourists, who may procure it at the country's main airports at \$400 per kilogramme.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - EGYPTIAN TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179 ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 09/12/1995					
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JOD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE JOD	CHANGING PRICE	
ARAB BANK P/C	540	127620	232,500	237,500	
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1489	6380	4,270	4,300	
MIDES INVESTMENT BANK	10000	11000	1,120	1,100	
THE HOUSING BANK	5500	4,159	4,170	4,150	
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	416	1127	2,730	2,750	
JORDAN GULF BANK	4700	5058	1,080	1,080	
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	618	2153	3,480	3,480	
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	300	990	3,300	3,300	
REIT EGYPT INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1000	350	3,100	3,100	
ARMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	9500	655C	1,900	1,900	
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	5550	838	1,510	1,510	
<b>BANKS SECTOR</b>					
	39664	200988	INDEX NUMBER: 187.59	CHANGE: +1.33%	
THE NATIONAL ARAB INSURANCE	1000	3000	3,000	3,000	
AL-NASSER AL-ARABI INSURANCE	550	2530	4,500	4,600	
<b>INSURANCE SECTOR</b>					
	1850	5530	INDEX NUMBER: 129.82	CHANGE: +0.21%	
JORDAN AIRPORTS & TERMINALS	57486	95712	1,640	1,680	
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	300	11980	2,900	2,900	
REAL STATE INVESTMENT	5500	5003	2,320	2,320	
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	2500	5370	2,100	2,150	
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1500	5208	3,200	3,270	
JORDAN EXPANDERS INVESTMENT HOLDING	8340	9508	1,090	1,140	
JORDAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES	150	175	1,190	1,170	
<b>SERVICES SECTOR</b>					
	75878	121736	INDEX NUMBER: 124.30	CHANGE: +0.82%	
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	6312	22070	2,490	2,500	
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	50	145	2,900	2,900	
THE ARAB POTASH	2500	11980	4,820	4,800	
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	278	2525	9,060	9,100	
JORDAN CARBON	910	6370	7,000	7,000	
THE JORDAN COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	500	1000	3,100	3,100	
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	3178	13031	4,120	4,130	
RAFFA INDUSTRIES	500	1058	2,130	2,110	
DAR AL-DALA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	850	5695	6,700	6,700	
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	250	2575	5,140	5,100	
LAJNAH PETROLEUM & POWER	3450	12050	1,360	1,360	
JORDAN PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	20250	27607	1,360	1,360	
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	100	183	1,950	1,830	
PALESTINE INDUSTRIES	550	539	.980	.980	
JORDAN SOCOMBO CHEMICALS	100	465	1,020	1,020	
JORDAN SCIENCE & CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	100	104	1,030	1,240	
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARMA. & CHEMICALS	1000	1200	1,210	1,200	
UNIVERSITY MODELS INDUSTRIES	2800	8228	2,890	2,950	
JOSEPH HAWAII INDUSTRIES CO.	1200	1201	2,820	2,820	
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	1240	1776	1,390	1,320	
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	9350	12322	1,320	1,320	
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRIES	20300	11732	1,680	1,530	
<b>INDUSTRIAL SECTOR</b>					
	119194	130963	INDEX NUMBER: 157.42	CHANGE: +0.20%	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>336286</b>	<b>519246</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 153.27</b>	<b>CHANGE: +0.93%</b>	
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	109376	107063			
VALUE THROUHD IN PARALLEL MARKET					

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin		Date: 9/12/1995
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7084	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0846	1.0900
Deutsche Mark	0.4887	0.4911
Swiss Franc	0.6051	0.6081
French Franc	0.1419	0.1426
Japanese Yen	0.	

## Shaq will be back soon

ORLANDO (R) — The Orlando Magic activated Shaquille O'Neal from the injured list on Friday and announced the superstar centre has been cleared to play next week.

O'Neal, who underwent surgery on his right thumb October 26 and was expected to miss six-to-eight weeks, may play his first game with the season on Tuesday when the Magic play at New Jersey.

The 7-foot-1 (2.16 m), 303-pound (137 kg) O'Neal took part in a shootaround Friday. He will be fitted with a soft splint on his right hand and is expected to practice with the team on Monday.

"Shaquille's quicker than anticipated return is definitely welcomed news," said Orlando vice president John Gabriel. "The team has performed admirably in his absence, but is glad the big guy's back."

The Magic are off to a 15-4 start without O'Neal. Jon Koncak has started at centre in O'Neal's absence.

## Klinsmann relishes clash with Nottingham Forest

GENEVA (R) — Jürgen Klinsmann, England's footballer of the year, is relishing the chance of knocking Britain's last remaining team out of Europe when Bayern Munich meet Nottingham Forest in the UEFA Cup quarter-finals.

Friday's draw brought together the former European Cup winners over two fascinating legs in March when Klinsmann will be hoping to add to this remarkable tally of 11 goals in Bayern's six games in the competition this season.

"Of course, I'm delighted to head over the England again," said Klinsmann, voted the best player in England in May at the end of his one season with Tottenham.

"But Forest will be a very hard nut to crack. I've a lot of respect for them. They play the old British style and put you under pressure with high, long crosses. Our chances are 50-50."

For Forest, the tie means a first leg return to the Olympic stadium in Munich where they won the 1979 European Cup final against Malmö with a goal from Trevor Francis. That year they also put out German champions Cologne in the semifinals.

Forest's assistant manager, Alan Hill said: "It's a tough one but we're delighted with the draw. We always prefer to play away from home first."

"We played Malmö in the 1979 European Cup final in Munich and we think it's a good omen."

Bayern are well aware that their record against English teams is far from convincing.

The Bavarians lost to Aston Villa in the 1982 European Cup final and were beaten by Liverpool in the semifinals of the 1981 competition. Bayern also took a long time to recover from their UEFA Cup second-round defeat by Norwich in

the 1993-94 season. "It's a hard draw because we have always had problems against English teams," Bayern vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said. "You only have to remember Aston Villa and Liverpool."

"We're going to have to get big cushion from the first leg to protect us against the raw wind that will blow in our faces in England."

The clash is one of two in the UEFA Cup pitting two former European champions against each other.

The tie between former champions Barcelona and Dutch side PSV Eindhoven is the pick of the draw, while cup favourites AC Milan, the fifth former European champions in the last eight, play Borussia of France.

The other tie is between Slavia Prague and Roma.

"Looking at the teams left in the draw, it could have been worse," Slavia's international director Kamil Rehak said.

Eindhoven coach Dick Advocaat said of the clash with Barcelona: "It won't be an easy game but it will be an interesting one, both teams want to play soccer. Both Barcelona and PSV are coming back and trying to reach the top in Europe again."

The plumb tie in the Cup Winners' Cup draw throws together Parma, winners in 1993 and runners-up in 1994 and Paris St. Germain, European semifinalists in each of the past three seasons. Holland's Real Zaragoza are paired with Spanish rivals Deportivo La Coruna.

Borussia Moenchengladbach and Feyenoord clash in what is sure to be another intense chapter in the soccer rivalry between Germany and the Netherlands.

The UEFA Cup matches are to be played on March 5 and 19 and the Cup Winners' Cup flies on March 7 and 21.

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## Curtain rises on 18th Southeast Asian Games

By Aleen Bannayan  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Although she has been in the U.S. for the past three months only, the Kingdom's new basketball star has proved herself worthy of the title "Original Jordan."

So called by local newspapers in Provo, Utah, (in reference to basketball great Michael Jordan). Jumana Salti has been given a four-year basketball scholarship at Brigham Young University (BYU).

Salti, who played for Al Jazireh before leaving to pursue her higher studies in the U.S., was also a key player in the Kingdom's women's national team that took part in the Asian Basketball Championship in Shizuoka, Japan in July.

Jordan's participation as the only Arab team at the tournament made history. It later turned out that the tournament was to be a turning for 18-year-old Jumana Salti as well.

A copy of an article in the Salt Lake City Tribune explains that a Mormon missionary couple in Amman sent a letter with clippings of newspapers to BYU coach urging her to recruit Salti who was chosen among the top five players in the tournament and was Jordan's top scorer and rebounder.

Salti applied and now the coach could not believe her good fortune: "Jumana made our team from the first day in the gym," says

Jordan's Jumana Salti goes up for a basket as three Indonesian players watch on during their match at the Women's Asian Basketball Championship in Japan, July 1995 (file photo)

ing four hours a day, six days a week.

"Jumana is very dedicated to the game, and I am delighted she made the team. I expected that because she is serious about the game. Even in Amman she used to come to practice early and work out extra," coach Sabbath told the Jordan Times.

According to Jazireh's coach Fadi Sabbath who contacted the player to learn of her basketball progress, Salti is now train-

many players have good potential and only need to concentrate and take the game seriously as well as have the attention of officials.

Earlier this year Al Abli under-18 player Zeid Alkhas also received a scholarship at Buffalo University after he was contacted by a coach while playing with the Kingdom's national youth team in the World Championship in Athens this past summer.

## Spurs, Suns, Pacers lose

ORLANDO (R) — Penny Hardaway and Dennis Scott keyed a 13-0 run down the stretch as the Orlando Magic held Charlotte scoreless for nearly four-and-a-half minutes and defeated the Hornets 105-95.

Hardaway led Orlando (16-4) with 28 points and Scott had 25 points for the Magic, who won their third straight. Hardaway hit 7-of-10 shots from the field and 14-of-18 from the free throw line.

Glen Rice led Charlotte (8-11) with 31 points, but was held to just two points in the fourth quarter. Larry Johnson had 18 points — none in the last quarter — for Charlotte.

A jumper by Dell Curry with 4:33 remaining gave Charlotte a 93-92 lead. But the Hornets did not score again until Kendall Gill hit a basket with 5.7 seconds after Orlando reeled off 13 consecutive points.

"It quit dropping," said Rice of the scoring drought. "There's nothing you can do about it when it won't go down."

Orlando, which announced Friday that star centre Shaquille O'Neal was ready to begin his season next week after getting over a thumb injury, improved to 11-0 at home this season.

In Chicago, Michael Jordan scored 28 points and Scottie Pippen added 19 as the Chicago Bulls routed the San Antonio Spurs 106-87 for their fifth straight win.

Luc Longley scored 16 points and former Spur Dennis Rodman grabbed 21 rebounds for Chicago, unbeaten in eight home games.

David Robinson had 30 points and 12 rebounds for San Antonio, which had its four-game winning streak snapped.

In Houston, Clyde Drexler scored 12 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter to lead the Houston Rockets to a 113-107 victory over the Washington Bullets.

Hakeem Olajuwon led Houston with 34 points and 11 rebounds and Drexler also had 11 rebounds for the Rockets, who won their fourth straight and improved to 8-1 at home.

"Olajuwon is our pillar both defensively and offensively, but when you put the ball in Clyde's hands incredible things happen," said Rockets head coach Rudy Tomjanovich.

Chris Webber led the Bullets with 24 points.

At New Jersey, P.J. Brown's 10-foot jumper with 59 seconds left snatched a tie and helped the New Jersey Nets remain unbeaten at home with a 91-89 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

Kevin Edwards scored 21 points and Brown scored 17



Detroit Pistons' forward Grant Hill drives past Denver Nuggets' forward Dale Ellis during the first period of their NBA game in Denver (Reuters photo)

points, while Jayson Williams had 18 rebounds for the Nets (8-9), who are 7-0 at the Meadowlands this season.

Derrick McKey had 25 points and Reggie Miller added 20 for Indiana (7-9).

In Denver, Dale Ellis scored 23 points as the surging Denver Nuggets posted a 103-98 over the Phoenix Suns.

The Nuggets have won seven of their last eight to move within a game of .500 (8-9) after starting the season 2-1 at home.

Mahmoud Abdul Rauf finished with 13 points on night after scoring an NBA season-high 51 points. Abdul Rauf was just 4-of-17 from the field, but handed out 12 assists.

John "hot rod" Williams led Phoenix with 23 points. The Suns played without Charles Barkley, who was out with the flu.

In Cleveland, Bobby Phills poured in 32 points as the Cleveland Cavaliers rolled past the Philadelphia 76ers 113-85.

Chris Mills added 21 for Cleveland, which is 7-2 since losing its first seven games.

Derrick Coleman scored 27 points and Shantone Wright added 20 for Philadelphia, which has lost 12 of 13 games and remains winless in eight road contests. The 76ers have lost their road games by an average of 19.4 points per game.

At Minnesota, Isaiah Rider had 27 points and Christian Laettner 26 as the Timberwolves used a third-quarter run to beat the Los Angeles Clippers 112-94.

The Clippers, losers of seven in a row, took a 60-53 lead with 9:08 left in the third on a jumper by Pooh Richardson, Minnesota

## NBA RESULTS

Cleveland	113	Philadelphia	85
New Jersey	91	Indiana	89
Minnesota	112	LA Clippers	94
Orlando	105	Charlotte	95
Chicago	106	San Antonio	87
Houston	113	Washington	107
Denver	103	Phoenix	98
Detroit	121	Golden State	114 (OT)
LA Lakers	120	Toronto	103
Seattle	120	Sacramento	103

Martina Ertl of Germany passes a gate on her way to win the women's Giant Slalom World Cup race in Val d'Isere Friday (Reuters photo)

## Alphand wins Val d'Isere downhill

VAL D'ISERE, France (AP) — Luc Alphand, the defending downhill World Cup champion, won a two-part downhill Saturday by .04 second over Austrian Roland Assinger.

The French skier had a total of 2 minutes, 20.71 seconds for the two runs down the course of 2.1 kilometres (1.3 miles) that dropped 620 metres (2,033 yards) was fifth World Cup victory for Alphand, all in the last nine downhills.

"All the victories are beautiful but this victory is a little better than the others," Alphand said. "Because ev-

erybody was expecting me to do well."

Assinger was second with 2:20.75 while Hannes Trinkl and Guenther Mader, two more Austrians, were third and fourth in 2:20.89 and 2:21.05.

Alphand had the top time in the first run, 1:09.82 when Assinger was ninth, 1:10.34. The Austrian had the best time in the afternoon, 1:10.41 with Alphand only getting the 11th best time but good enough for the best overall.

Xavier Gigandet of Switzerland was fifth in 2:21.06 with another Austrian Andreas Schifferer

fifth in the first run, dropped to 14th with a total time of 2:21.53.

The race was run in two shortened sections because of the poor snow conditions and warm weather. Normally the famed Orelle-Killy track is more than 3.4 kilometres (2.1 miles) long.

Alphand won the season title last year and took the opening downhill at Vail, Colorado, last month. He also won twice in one day at Kitzbuehel, Austria, last January on longer courses that counted as two separate victories.

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IAAF deny  
rigging  
athlete of  
year awards

MONTE CARLO (R) — The International Amateur Athletic Federation on Friday denied claims that its 1994 athlete of the year awards were rigged to make them more attractive to television.

"We firmly reject these allegations," IAAF General Secretary Istvan Gyulai told Reuters. "There is no explanation for them."

Former IAAF spokesman Christopher Winner told the USA Today newspaper that Britain's Sally Gunnell had topped the women's poll, but was replaced as the athlete of the year by American Jackie Joyner Kersee, and that Britain's Colin Jackson was demoted from second to fourth place in the men's voting.

Winner claimed the IAAF had pushed the two British hurdlers down the poll when learned that neither planned to attend the annual gala dinner in Monte Carlo at which the awards were announced.

Gunnell won the European 400 metres hurdles crown last year in a world record time to become only the second athlete after Daley Thompson to hold Olympic, world, European and Commonwealth titles simultaneously.

Heptathlon world record holder Joyner Kersee was the overall winner of the women's Grand Prix in 1994.

The glittering black-tie ball is televised to 74 countries around the world.

Friday's edition of USA Today quoted Winner as saying: "I take full responsibility. I can only express shame for participating in what amounts to gross vote rigging."

Winner claimed that IAAF President Primo Nebiolo wanted to ensure the top three athletes in the men's and women's polls would all attend the gala to make it more attractive to television.

SPORTS IN BRIEF	
<b>Wilson to sponsor S. African tennis</b>	JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Wilson Sporting Goods company announced it would put up \$4.4 million rand (\$1.15 million) over three years to boost tennis in South Africa. The money will help revitalise a struggling national programme that has produced world-class players such as Wayne Ferreira but lacked sufficient sponsorship last year to hold an open tournament. MTN, a cellular phone company, recently pledged 10 million rand (\$2.8 million) to the South African Tennis Association over a three-year period. Eric Lindquist, managing director of Wilson's South African operation, said the sponsorship fit into Wilson's worldwide efforts to support and promote tennis. "Our principal focus will be on coaches, who are the lifeblood of the sport," Lindquist said, adding that Wilson planned to open 150 sports centres throughout the country over the next three years to boost tennis and other sports in black communities.
<b>\$10 million for Sarajevo Olympic facilities</b>	LAUSANNE (AP) — The International Olympic Committee (IOC) will spend \$10 million to rebuild war-damaged sports facilities in Sarajevo constructed there for the 1994 Winter Olympics. An IOC spokeswoman Friday couldn't specify what buildings would be involved, but said a team would be going to the war-torn Bosnian city early next year to begin the project. "I can't say exactly what is going to be built — or rebuilt," said Amanda Pingree, a spokeswoman for the IOC. "Buildings from the Olympics damaged from the war would be in the plans." Pingree said more details would be released when high-ranking IOC officials return over the weekend from meetings in Karuizawa, Japan. Reports have suggested the project would be completed before the opening of the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta this summer. The centrepiece of the rebuilding will probably be Zetra Olympic hall, used in the 1984 games for ice hockey and figure skating.
<b>Redknapp out of England squad</b>	LONDON (AP) — Liverpool's Jamie Redknapp pulled out of the England squad on Friday following a fitness test on a hamstring problem. Anfield manager Roy Evans withdrew the star midfielder, in coach Terry Venables' plans for the friendly against Portugal next Tuesday. Evans said: "He's not quite right and we cannot afford to take the chance. You don't take chances with hamstrings."
<b>Former Knicks forward to play in Italy</b>	BOLOGNA, Italy (AP) — Anthony Bonner, a former forward with the New York Knicks of the U.S. National Basketball Association, has joined Italian league champion Buckler Bologna, replacing injured Orlando Woolridge. Bologna, the current leader in the Italian League, signed the 6-foot-6 (1.98 metres) Bonner after Woolridge broke his right hand in a European Cup game last week. Woolridge, who went to Detroit for surgery, will be sidelined at least two months. Last season, Bonner's fifth in the NBA and second with New York, he averaged 3.8 points per game.

**Jordan Times**  
Tel: 684311/  
699634

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANAH HIRSCH

### SCORE ONE FOR THE COUNT

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

**NORTH**  
♦ 7 6 4  
♦ 10 6 7 3  
♦ A 9 5  
♦ Q J 4

**WEST**  
♦ 8 2  
♦ Q 8 6 4 3 2  
♦ 9 7 5 2

**EAST**  
♦ K Q 10 9 6 5

♦ 6 5 2  
♦ 9 7  
♦ 9 6 3

**SOUTH**  
♦ A J  
♦ Q A K Q J 9  
♦ K J 10  
♦ A K 10

**Opening lead:** Three of ♦  
Sometimes all you need to do is obtain a count of the distribution to cash your winners. More often, you have to do a bit of spade work. However, it is almost always rewarding.

North-South were playing weak two-bids, so two clubs simply showed a strong hand and two diamonds.

South was on the right track but did not advance the play far enough. Better technique would be to win the opening lead and then trump in the red suit and then clear the club. Now declarer exits with the jack of spades. After winning the king, East can do no better than return the suit, ruffed in the closed hand as West discards a diamond.

What does declarer know about the East hand? East started with six diamonds, three hearts and at least three clubs, and cannot have more than one diamond. So declarer simply cashes the king of diamonds, in case East's singleton is the queen, then takes the marked finesse for the queen through West.

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## FIFA faces dilemma over Nigeria

NAGOYA (R) — World champion Lu Chen of China won the women's event at the NHK Trophy Grand Prix Figure Skating Competition for the second straight year on Saturday.

On a good day for defending champions, last year's world title winners Evgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov won the pairs final here for the third time, their second Grand Prix victory of the year.

The 19-year-old Lu, who led after the short programme, performed a near-flawless free skate routine peppered with crisp jumps and solid landings. She earned five scores of 5.9 for her presentation.

Hanac Yokoya of Japan finished second and Olga Markova of Russia was third.

But Surya Bonaly of France, three times a silver medallist at the World Championships, came in a lowly fourth after placing second in the short programme.

Bonaly fell on the triple loop and managed only a single lutz instead of a triple.

Shishkova and Naumov, who led after the short programme, swept through a flowing sequence to the music from Don Quixote in the free skate to notch up marks of between 5.7 and 5.9 for presentation from the nine-judge panel.

The Russians would have had higher marks had Shishkova not crashed to the ice on the side-by-side double axel.

European champions Mano Woezel and Ingo Steuer of Germany had to make do with second, while Russians Natalia Krestyanina and Alexei Torehinsky were third.

## Champions shine at NHK trophy



Russian pairs Evgenia Shishkova (right) and Vadim Naumov performs their short programme to lead the pairs event of the NHK Trophy Figure Skating Grand Prix in Nagoya (Reuters photo)



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Kevin Costner in <b>WATERWORLD</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi and Mahmoud Hamidieh in <b>A Woman Who shook the Throne of Egypt</b> (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi and Mahmoud Hamidieh ...in <b>A Woman Who shook the Throne of Egypt</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 10:30 <b>CONCORD "2"</b> Sylvester Stallone in <b>ASSASSINS</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 10:15	MUSA HIJAZIN "Sumaa" in <b>Hi Citizen</b> daily at 8:30 p.m. Written & directed by Mohammad Shawaqfeh	Shows begin on Dec. 19, 1995 and continue on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (three days a week) only. The programme continues until the start of the holy month of Ramadan. The Show is entitled: <b>"Ahlan Tatbie"</b> Welcome Normalisation For reservation call 625155

# Egypt's 'bloodiest' elections killed 40 – monitoring group

CAIRO (Agencies) — Forty people were killed and between 400 and 700 injured in Egypt's general election, a local monitoring group said on Saturday, terming it the bloodiest poll since parliament was set up in 1866.

"The first and second rounds of Egypt's parliament elections between Nov. 29 and Dec. 6 witnessed unprecedented bloody violence in the history of Egypt's parliamentary life since it started in 1866," the Egyptian Committee for Monitoring Elections said in a statement.

A government newspaper meanwhile condemned the landslide by President Hosni Mubarak's ruling party in the elections, saying Hitler and Mussolini had never won such sweeping majorities.

"These results signal the fall of democracy and the beginning of an era of one-party rule," wrote Mustapha Amin, one of the founders of the prestigious weekly *Akhbar Al Yom*.

The National Democratic Party (NDP) took 416 of 444 seats in the People's Assembly in elections rocked by violence and opposition accusations of massive fraud by the government.

The opposition was left with 14 seats, along with 14 independents.

Mr. Amin said: "Neither Hitler nor Mussolini succeeded in gaining such a majority, which indicates that the assembly will become merely an NDP committee."

"All those who dared to

speak up or raised sensitive issues to the government in previous parliaments fell" in the elections.

The Interior Minister formally announced on Friday that the NDP won a 94 per cent majority in the poll.

"The most dangerous aspect of the election process was that it revived dangerous tendencies threatening social peace such as emphasising sectarian and tribal sentiments, deepening rigging as a collective social behaviour and using money and violence as common and effective methods in political activity," said the Egyptian Committee for Monitoring Elections, made up of public figures and six human rights groups.

Egypt's main human rights group, the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights, said on Friday that some opposition figures had also tried to rig the vote and in some cases police and local authorities gave them a hand.

"In some cases this intervention took place in an attempt to improve the image of the next parliament after the large-scale governmental intervention in the first round had led to the failure of all the opposition parties," it added (see page 2).

The monitoring group said the unprecedented violence came from a general feeling among voters and opposition groups that the state was unjust or unable to run the electoral process. This pushed many candidates and

supporters to take the law into their own hands."

It said the 40 people who were killed should be declared, "martyrs of democracy."

Mr. Mubarak told reporters on Thursday that the government did not intervene and blamed the candidates and their supporters for the violence.

The monitoring group said violations were: arresting agents of opposition and Islamist candidates to prevent them from monitoring the process, using public money and government-owned media to support NDP candidates, opening polling before the official time, and massive irregularities in voter lists.

Thousands of Christians could not find their names on the lists and in constituencies where Copts ran as candidates, their rivals distributed leaflets saying Muslims should not vote for non-Muslims.

The group also criticised the government for ignoring court rulings ordering it to refrain from announcing results in 109 constituencies out of the country's 222 following allegation of rigging and other irregularities.

It concluded that the only way Egyptians would regain trust in elections would be to guarantee total judicial supervision over the process, guarantee freedom to set up political parties and provide media that could give a different view from that dominated by the government.

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# King visits RJ facility, briefed on airline's operations and plans

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday visited the operations department of Royal Jordanian (RJ) at the Queen Alia International Airport and met with top RJ officials including Walid Kurdi, RJ board chairman, Nader Dahabi, the airline's chief executive officer, Civil Aviation Authority Director General Ahmad Jweiber, the air force chief and Captain Taghreed Akashah, RJ vice president for operations.

Capt. Akashah presented a briefing on the department's plans for reorganising RJ's administrative and operational plans as well as efforts to modernise the airline's aircraft, improve services and recruit a new generation of commercial pilots.

The King also listened to proposals from RJ officials and pilots for improving performance and lauded their efforts and passed directives on efforts to modernise the airline's fleet and acquire modern facilities and equipment to



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday visits the operations department of Royal Jordanian (Petra photo)

ensure safety.

The King presented an award to Capt. George Matta in recognition of his long services to RJ and Capt. Yousef Abu Dayyeb for his skill in handling an RJ flight upon landing in

Aqaba at the moment when the earthquake hit the port city three weeks ago.

The RJ pilots presented the King with a token gift on his 60th birthday.

The King inspected a

newly installed technical centre at the airport providing vital information to air crew during take-off and landing and announced that he was allotting a piece of land for the Royal Falcons to set up a club.

# PNA ministers to stand down after election law is published

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian ministers planning to stand in historic first elections on Jan. 20 were ordered to resign their posts under an electoral law published Saturday.

The law, approved Thursday by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and carried in full by Palestinian newspapers, sets out all the conditions for would-be candidates in the unprecedented Palestinian polls.

"Ministers, civil servants, mayors and employees of international organisations must resign their posts at least 10 days before the list of candidates is published," the text said.

Police and judges who want to be candidates must do likewise, it said. "If they are not elected, they will not be able to get their old jobs back," it added.

Nominations for candidates will begin Dec. 14 and run until Dec. 22. Local Government Minister Sach Erakat has said. The list of candidates is to be published Dec. 30.

Nabil Shaath, international cooperation minister, said minister-candidates were to hand in their notices to Mr. Arafat at next Saturday's cabinet meeting.

Palestinians aged 18 and over in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem will vote in the first elections in their history on Jan. 20.

They will vote in two separate polls — one for an 83-member autonomy council, and the other to elect a president of an executive authority, to be drawn from the council.

Candidates for a seat on the autonomy council must pay \$1,000 to the finance ministry to be eligible to stand, while those running

for president must pay \$3,000.

Only winning candidates will get their deposits back.

In addition, candidates for the autonomy council must be aged 30 or more, and candidates for the presidency must be at least 35.

Candidates standing as independents will have to secure 500 backers to run for the council, and 5,000 signatures to run for the presidency. The rule does not apply to party candidates.

"The polling stations in the 16 constituencies will be open between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.," the electoral law said.

Voters will vote for as many candidates as the seats that are up for grabs in their constituency. They will select their choices from a list of candidates.

Candidates for a seat on the autonomy council must pay \$1,000 to the finance ministry to be eligible to stand, while those running

that any run-offs will be organised within 10 days of the first round.

Candidates will be allowed to run "ordered" election campaigns in the West Bank including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, while the press will be granted equal access time to all the candidates.

"Electoral meetings cannot take place in mosques, churches or in state offices," the law states.

It also forbids candidates to use overseas funds to finance their campaigns.

More than one million Palestinians have registered to vote in the elections so far.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and other hardline groups opposed to the Israeli-PLO autonomy deals, have said they will not take part in the elections, despite appeals from Mr. Arafat for widespread participation.

# COLUMN

U.S. admiral punished in adultery case

WASHINGTON (R) — A married two-star admiral who had a year-long affair with a junior enlisted woman was found guilty of adultery, stripped of one star, fined and confined to quarters for 30 days, the Washington Post and New York Times reported Saturday. Quoting navy officials, the newspaper said Rear Admiral Ralph Tindal, 58, also was found guilty in an administrative hearing of fraternisation, conduct unbecoming an officer and sexual harassment. Adultery is a crime under military law. Adm. Tindal, deputy commander of NATO forces in Spain and Portugal, is the highest ranking officer in recent memory found guilty of a sexual crime, the Post said. Adm. Tindal's punishment came as the navy ended a "stand-down" called by chief of naval operations Admiral Jeremy Boorda after a series of sex-related cases were made public. During the stand-down all navy personnel attended classes to review regulations and standards concerning "order and good discipline." The woman, whose age and rank were not released, faced no disciplinary action and was given administrative coddling instead, the Post reported.

Court denies Ito sent 'white Christmas' cards

LOS ANGELES (R) — The Los Angeles Superior Court Friday denied reports that O.J. Simpson murder trial Judge Lance Ito sent out Christmas cards poking fun at the race issue that arose during the celebrated case. "News reports of a Christmas card from Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Lance Ito featuring a picture of him in court with text concerning a white Christmas are incorrect," the court's information office said in a brief statement. "Judge Ito has no connection in any way with any such card," the statement said, asking news organisations not to "perpetuate erroneous reports that Judge Ito has sent or is sending Christmas cards of this nature." Daily Variety reported Thursday that Judge Ito had sent out cards featuring a photo of himself on the bench, face buried in his hands, above the caption: "Objection overruled, Mr. Cochran White Christmas does not have racist overtones." The reference is to Simpson's lawyer Johnnie Cochran, who frequently raised the issue of race during the nine-month trial, which ended on Oct. 3 with the football hero acquitted of murdering his ex-wife and her friend.

3 Nigerians to hang for killing hunchback

LAGOS (R) — Three Nigerians including a 75-year-old man were sentenced to hang for strangling a hunchback and cutting off his hunch for use in a potion. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported Friday that herbalist Latif Solola, his 25-year-old son Jamilu and another relative Lateef Oloye, 41, were found guilty of the murder by a tribunal in the western town of Abeokuta. Tribunal chairman Judge Wole Popoola said they should die because their crime was barbaric and they deserved no mercy. The prosecution accused the condemned men of tricking a 15-year-old hunchback into the herbalist's home in Abeokuta where they strangled him and severed his hunch.

# Boy Scouts visit Gaza to build friendship

DEIR AL BALAH (AP) — A group of Boy Scouts made an unusual field trip Saturday, expressing dissatisfaction with talks with a government-appointed mediator over a 16-day stoppage paralysing France.

Mediator Jean Matteoli said the government was willing to put off the signing of a five-year restructuring plan for a week over plans to streamline the loss-making network. Unions had called for withdrawal of the plan.

"In response to a unanimous request to withdraw the plan, the government suggests putting back the signature by eight days ... there's nothing new," said Bernard Thibault, secretary-general of the communist-led CGT union after meeting Mr. Matteoli in Paris. He said the strike would go on.

Unions say the plan, origi-

# French rail unions extend strike after failure of talks

PARIS (Agencies) — French rail union leaders agreed to extend a rail strike on Saturday, expressing dissatisfaction with talks with a government-appointed mediator over a 16-day stoppage paralysing France.

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"In response to a unanimous request to withdraw the plan, the government suggests putting back the signature by eight days ... there's nothing new," said Bernard Thibault, secretary-general of the communist-led CGT union after meeting Mr. Matteoli in Paris. He said the strike would go on.

Unions say the plan, origi-

nally due to be signed next Wednesday, threatens their pay, benefits and job security. News of the delay of the signing on Friday was the first concession by the conservative government.

In a new conciliatory gesture to the unions, Mr. Matteoli said his mandate had been extended to consider strikers' demands to maintain the current pension regimes, which allows some rail workers to retire as early as 50.

Previously, his mandate was merely to explain the five-year plan. The rail network was crippled for a 16th day in a row on Saturday.

Government spokesman Alain Lamassoure said "negotiations" could be held on ways to implement the plan to slash France's huge social security budget deficit.

"The government has offered its hand," he told the

press.

Under a "first past the post" system, those with the largest number of votes will be elected. The law states

# Papandreou said improving amid calls for him to resign

ATHENS (R) — Ailing Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou was breathing slightly better on Saturday while calls for his replacement grew both from his socialists and opposition parties.

The latest medical bulletin said Mr. Papandreou, 76, was increasingly breathing on his own without the help of a respirator, the second day of good news after he managed to sit up in a chair for a first time in two weeks on Friday.

"The prime minister's general condition is stable," it said. "The periods during which the patient is breathing without the help of a respirator are gradually increasing."

The improvement was largely due to a tracheotomy operation, which cuts a hole in the windpipe, that eased Mr. Papandreou's breathing and improved his mobility.

A government spokesman rushed to say he could go home this month, but Mr. Papandreou, who swept to power as Greece's first socialist prime minister in 1981, was still dependent on life-support machines for his failing kidneys and lungs.

Doctors have said it is doubtful he could ever fully return to his duties.

The main conservative opposition New Democracy Party called on Friday for his immediate replacement, urging members of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), which Mr. Papandreou founded in 1974, to find a solution soon.

"It is obvious that even if the premier recovers he will unfortunately not be able to resume his duties. It is a national necessity to solve the problem of the country's government," New Democracy leader Miltiades Evert said in

a televised statement.

Mr. Evert, whose party was given a five per cent lead over the socialists in a recent poll, said: "I call on PASOK's parliamentary group to take all measures so that the country exits the crisis. It is their duty to find a solution."

A growing number of PASOK deputies, led by hopeful successor and former Industry Minister Costas Simitis, have started to publicly address the issue of a leaderless nation.

"This vacuum of responsibility can no longer exist," Mr. Simitis told a PASOK meeting late on Friday.

While there is widespread consensus within PASOK that Mr. Papandreou should be replaced, none of his potential successors has dared to challenge him publicly.